

Tales of the American Night

Unravelling Jim Morrison's Poetic Wilderness



Koben Sprengers

Tales of the American Night

Unravelling Jim Morrison's Poetic Wilderness

Koben Sprengers

R0307797

Master Dissertation

Professor Pieter Vermeulen

Master of Western Literature

Academic year of 2016-2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, **Professor Pieter Vermeulen**, for the guidance he has given and the freedom he has granted me. I would also like to thank **my parents and my brother**, for a lifetime of faith and support; my dear friends **Rutger Vandeweerdt, Raphaël Vandeweyer, Kevin Heylen/Pol Zandvliet, Denver Harrington** and **Stef Lenearts**, for their apparent bottomless creativity and insight and the many years of friendship that ultimately brought me here; **Marta Woźny**, for being the wonderful person she is; and finally, my high school English teacher, **Herman Delauré**, for sparking the flame of poetry within a young and fool-hearted teenager many years ago.

Table of Contents

0. Introduction	5
1. The Lords	
1.1 Social Discontent	14
1.2 Greek Tragedy	17
1.3 Psychoanalytical dimension of Grecian worship cultures	20
1.4 The Lords of the City.....	25
1.5 The Symbolic Dominance	31
2. Life Inside the City	37
2.1 Vision & Death	38
2.2 Vision & Life	41
2.3 Cinema & Death.....	47
3. Reinventing the Myths	51
3.1 Artaud's Legacy.....	54
3.2 Amplified Language	57
3.3 Cinema & life	59
4. The New Creatures in the Wilderness.....	67
4.1 The Violence of the American Night.....	70
4.2 The Women of the American Night.....	75
5. The Doors of Perception.....	77
5.1 Blake's Legacy	78
5.2 The Marriage of Opposites	81
6. Morrison & The Beat Generation.....	91
6.1 Thematic Parallels.....	91
6.2 The Empire Strikes Back.....	100
6.3 Morrison & McClure	103

7. Prose Poetry: The Style of The Lords	107
7.1 Morrison & The French Symbolist	107
7.2 The American Prose Poem.....	108
7.3 Morrison & the Postmodernists	113
8. Morrison's Poetic Voice	123
8.1 Morrison & the Deep Image Poets	123
8.2 Morrison & the Confessionalists	129
9. Conclusion	137
10. Endnotes	140
11. Bibliography	146
12. Abstract	153

Thus one tried to compel the gods by using rhythm
and to force their hand: poetry was thrown at them
like a magical snare.

—Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

Introduction

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche famously ventured that Greek tragedy —a fusion of music, theatre and poetry— had established a more compelling art-form than either of its components. While the musical and theatrical aspects of James Douglas Morrison's life have been discussed ad nauseam, his poetry sadly still lingers in the half-forgotten shadows which lie beyond the obsession with Jim Morrison, the myth.

Up to this day, Jim Morrison's poetry remains a subject generally unappreciated within academic circles, which often consider it to be vain and trivial due to the combination of Morrison's image as a rock star and the often highly obscure nature of his poetry, but the tide is slowly turning.ⁱ Academic interest in Morrison's poetry has sparked off around the turn of the century and research has been gradually growing ever since. Tony Magistrale's entry *Wild Child: Jim Morrison's Poetic Journey* (1992), appearing in the magazine *The Journal of Popular Culture*, is generally regarded as the start of Morrison-scholarship, quickly followed by Wallace Fowlie's *The Rebel as Poet* (1994), a comparison between the life of Arthur Rimbaud and that of Jim Morrison. Ever since, a small dozen of papers and dissertations have appeared on the subject. Notwithstanding, an in-depth analysis of the overarching framework of Morrison's poetry has as of yet not been realized. Given the fact that it is nearly impossible, or at least extremely difficult, to analyse Morrison's poetry in a satisfying manner without first fully comprehending the philosophical framework enfolding his poetry, most of his literary qualities consequently remain to this day unknown. I therefore decided to use the platform of my master dissertation for a first attempt to develop such framework to ultimately uncover Morrison's literary value as a poet. His poetic language is often quite startling, haunting and obscure at first, yet open up to a radiant brilliance once the complementary symbols and imagery, scattered throughout the various poems, are combined and connected within the larger philosophical frame. In this paper I will describe and reconstruct the inner structures of Morrison's philosophy as a first small but firm step towards a comprehensive in-depth analysis of his poetic universe. Unfortunately, due to the physical limitations of this paper I will not be able to delve deeper into a stylistic and thematic analysis of the poetry, nor to frame it in its larger

context of 20th century American literature. Neither will I analyse or refer to any of the lyrics Morrison wrote for *The Doors*, simply because, even though quite a few of them recover some of the imagery of his philosophical framework, Morrison's actual poems serve as a better medium for his philosophy and thus prove to be more competent research material for this paper. The simple act of removing the rock star from the script, as this project intends, will open up the gateway beyond which an illuminated analysis may be found. I focused predominantly on Morrison's first two volumes of poetry, self-published as one collection in the year 1970, to avoid dealing with poems which Morrison might not have considered ready for print. The two additional volumes, posthumously published, include some well-known poems, such as *An American Prayer*, in combination, however, with what can only be regarded as drafts of unfinished poems or failed experiments.

While working on his poetry several years ago, I observed that there is a distinct metaphysical system at work within, around and beyond Morrison's poetry and that his poems cling together in a vast network of thematic and symbolic imagery. The various themes of Morrison's poetry are often cut up into numerous symbolic images and scattered across several poems, which in their turn are dispersed across the volume. As a key characteristic, the idea of quantitatively endless and dense variation pervades Morrison's poetry and the many aspects on which it is built, both thematically, symbolically and referentially. This idea represents the main paradox of Morrison's poetic world: life as illusory promise and life as endless possibility. With nearly self contradictory entities appearing almost everywhere, the reader must continually come to grips with this paradox throughout the poetry.ⁱⁱ The philosophical framework slowly emerges through the symbolic imagery scattered all over Morrison's poems and the reader will in due time be able to connect and ultimately piece together different bits and parts spread across the different volumes. These different bits and parts, numerous interlinked —sometimes even the same— symbols, consistently (re)appear in different poems and create what writer and theorist David Shields calls "thematic resonances."ⁱⁱⁱ In connecting the various ideas and symbols surrounding the main themes of Morrison's poetry, the reader is thus actively involved in the (re)creation of the philosophical network of Morrison's aesthetic poetics. All of those "thematic resonances" tied together will ultimately construct the philosophical framework of Morrison's aesthetics.

After discovering the structure and mechanisms behind Morrison's poetry, I decided to venture on an endeavour to decode this vast network of philosophical and metaphysical symbolic imagery. To avoid getting horribly lost in Morrison's intricate poetic and philosophical labyrinth and ending up contradicting myself on several levels, like many have before, I concluded Ariadne's thread would be to restrict myself to stay as closely connected to the poetic corpus as possible and re-associate each theory I related to the poetry back to a larger collection of poems. As a consequence, the analysis of most poems I refer to will be limited to the symbols under discussion at that specific moment in the paper and not pertain to the poems in their totality; only a handful of poems will receive more in-depth treatment. The research needed close comparison of the various symbols in the different contexts they appear in, along with the meticulously mapping out of every contradiction and paradox and the linking of all the different symbols, in their complex ambiguous fullness, making sure in every single step that everything fit into the larger framework. Each time I stumbled upon yet another contradiction, I had no choice but to dissect that specific symbolic connection over and over until even the smallest piece would fall into its rightful place. With this method I ultimately managed to map out the entire metaphysical system along with a series of major themes around which Morrison structured and organized his body of poetry and, as a result, what so often has been labelled trivial rock star or incomprehensible junkie poetry opens up to reveal a largely cohesive and deeply intelligent creed.^{iv}

Part 1: Philosophical framework

Chapter 1: The Lords

During his life, Morrison published two volumes of poetry: *The Lords*, which was self-published in 1969; and *The New Creatures*, which was published along with *The Lords* for the double volume *The Lords & The New Creatures* by Simon and Schuster in 1970. More than a decade after Morrison's death, two more volumes were published, edited from his notebooks by his close friend Frank Lisciandro. The first of these volumes, titled *Wilderness* was published in 1988 by Vintage Books; the second one, titled *The American Night* was published in 1991 by Random House. The volume of *The Lords* contains 79 poems, *The New Creatures* only contains 45. The two posthumously published volumes both exceed the amount of 200 pages. The style of Morrison's later poetry differs significantly from his earliest poems, which he wrote while attending UCLA, around 1964-65, which would later be published in the volume of poetry titled *The Lords*. The overarching stylistic structure of *The Lords*, which was conceived as a "thesis on film aesthetics" and functions in a great deal as Morrison's aesthetic and philosophic manifesto, is designed in a peculiar way, surprisingly similar to David Shields' publication on the collage style and the montage technique, titled *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto* (2010). Shields' manifesto is a plead for the collage as new format for present-day literature and is made up of cut-ups, mosaics, unmarked quotations, chance creations, remixes, mash-ups and homages all brought together in a series of short, sharp provocations in what arguably could be labelled as prose poetry. *The Lords*, too, is designed as an assemblage of various ideas, quotations, single sentences which all influence and affect each other in the sum of the whole. The first read confronts one with a series of *seemingly* unrelated poems containing highly divergent ideas, chunks of thought, themes and anecdotes, and as a consequence, the reader might find Morrison's manifesto (and perhaps Shields' manifesto as well) cryptic and chaotic at first, even outright incomprehensible. Yet after noticing various recurring elements, slowly a vast network of ideas and arguments starts to emerge from the initially dense and disorderly surface. Such a structure, Shields argues, brings literature closer to the actual experience of life and consciousness than a clear and structured work of literature would:

Conventional fiction teaches the reader that life is a coherent, fathomable whole that concludes in neatly wrapped-up revelation. Life, though —standing on a street corner, channel surfing, trying to navigate the web or a

declining relationship, hearing that a close friend died last night— flies at us in bright splinters.^v

In connecting the ideas and symbols surrounding the various themes of the volume, the reader is thus actively involved in the (re)creation of the theoretic network of Morrison's aesthetic manifesto; an act what Shields labels as the "momentum" of modern literature/poetry:

Momentum, in literary mosaic, derives not from narrative but the subtle, progressive buildup of thematic resonances.^{vi}

All of those "thematic resonances" tied together will ultimately construct the philosophical framework of Morrison's manifesto. Shield uses a web as a metaphor for such a network of thematic connections to explain how his construction functions in comparison with tradition structures:

When plot shapes a narrative, it's like knitting a scarf. You have this long piece of string and many choices about how to knit, but we understand a sequence is involved, a beginning and an end, with one part of the weave very logically and sequentially connected to the next. You can figure out where the beginning is and where the last stitch is cast off. Webs look orderly, too, but unless you watch the spider weaving, you'll never know where it started. It could be attached to branches or table legs or eaves in six or eight places. You won't know the sequence in which the different cells were spun and attached to each other. You have to decide for yourself how to read its patterning, but if you pluck it at any point, the entire web will vibrate.^{vii}

Shields' metaphor of the spider web, with its "different cells [that] were spun and attached to each other" which ultimately creates a network of resonances, so that "if you pluck it at any point, the entire web will vibrate," strongly resembles the famous metaphor of the rhizome structure to symbolize the workings of a postmodern literary piece, originally described by two gurus of contemporary social analysis, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.^{viii} With the full publication of *The Lords & The New Creatures*, Morrison seems to be trying to attain a unified vision/theory that encompasses both modern technology and humanity's mythic heritage. The first division of the book, *The Lords*, is a combination of a mystical/philosophical treatise and cultural criticism, often supplemented with historical references, in which Morrison blends the transcendentalism and idealism of William Blake and Nietzsche with sharp, insightful criticism in the line of Roland Barthes. The second part of the book consists largely of

free verse and is more enigmatic and lyrical. Yet, with its often nightmarish imagery and blood-soaked scenes of brutal violence, *The New Creatures* comes across as Morrison's own personal *Book of Revelation*. An important theme in this book is the archetypal city, host to the alchemist, the voyeur, the assassin, and of course *the Lords*. All of these figures will be dealt with over the course of this paper. The larger part of *The Lords* deals with the motion picture as both art and cultural institution, combined with hallucinogenic swirls of cross-cultural references and allusions: Yoga, hermaphroditism, the Christian trinity, the assassination of United States President John F. Kennedy by the coward Lee Harvey Oswald, Tarot cards, ventriloquism, lynching, etc. One of the most striking aspects of the entire volume is that the first part, *The Lords*, is dominated by prose poems, in tradition of the French Symbolist movement, by which Morrison was fascinated and heavily influenced. Yet, what exactly is a prose poem? According to the leading scholar on prose poetry, David Lehman, is the best short definition almost tautological: the prose poem is a poem written in prose rather than verse. On the page it can look like a paragraph or fragmented short story, but it acts like a poem. The main difference with regular verse is that a prose poem works in sentences rather than lines. With the one exception of the line-break, it can make use of all the strategies and tactics of poetry. Just as free verse did away with meter and rhyme, the prose poem does away with the line as the unit of composition. It uses the means of prose toward the ends of poetry. The prose poem is, one might say, poetry that disguises its true nature. It is a form that sets store by its use of the demotic, its willingness to locate the sources of poetry defiantly far from the spring on Mount Helicon sacred to the muses. And it is an insistently modern form. It is mostly in the combined volume of poetry, *The Lords & The New Creatures*, that Morrison's philosophy is manifested by means of poetry. Slowly, the vast network of imagery and symbols appear, yet many connections are brief and ethereal and therefore difficult to capture in a fixed system. It takes time and effort to be able to firmly grasp the various connections between the different symbols, but ultimately they gain so many associations that the network slowly arises. In short, the poetry itself shapes and is simultaneously shaped by its philosophical network. The philosophy itself, which eventually develops in a circular pattern, can be divided into three steps, all of which will be discussed thoroughly over the course of this paper. The first stage is a stage of social discontent, malaise and sickness.

1.1 Social Discontent

Look where we worship.

[page break]

We all live in the city.

The city forms—often physically, but inevitably psychically—a circle. A Game. A ring of death with sex at its center. Drive towards outskirts of city suburbs. At the edge discover zones of sophisticated vice and boredom, child prostitution. But in the grimy ring immediately surrounding the daylight business district exists the only real crowd life of our mound, the only street life, night life. Diseased specimens in dollar hotels, low boarding houses, bars, pawn shops, burlesques and brothels, in dying arcades which never die, in streets and streets of all-night cinemas.^{ix}

The poem cited above is the very first poem of the very first volume of poetry that Morrison published and he paints a rather grim picture of modern (urbanized) life. A ubiquitous sense of disease and decay strongly characterizes this poem, as well as Morrison's poetic universe in general, scalding and festering in every layer of the "mound," each layer qualified by a different state of corruption. Throughout Morrison's poetry, the city symbolizes and embraces all of civilized society, where "we all live" concentrated in a large, insectoid circle, "a ring of death with sex at its center." The primary concept Morrison establishes in his poetry, is to place the whole of society within the two borders of life: sex which creates life and death which quells it. These two elements not only constitute the essence of life, but also the essence of Morrison's poetry as the first of many dichotomies which will determine the crux and the cadence of Morrison's poetics. The first brick in the reconstruction of the framework of his poetics is composed of the elements of disease and decay, spreading like a virus through the veins of civilization. Morrison analyses and identifies three areas inside the city, or circle, namely the suburbs, the inner city and the central business district, its focal point, with specific characteristics in each area. In the suburbs, one finds the typical characteristics of 50's suburban life, i.e. a mixture of boredom and "sophisticated vice,"

which seems to co-exist with the sense of boredom rather than to extinguish it. Yet, suburban life is accompanied by a very strong symbol of corruption, the most perverse and cruel kind of prostitution: child prostitution, usually also connected with physical abuse and human trafficking. Morrison is not claiming that every suburban habitant is a child molester in this poem, rather that the supposedly boring and wholesome lifestyle which was widely advertised in the 50's was only a very feeble film covering up a much more perverted and corrupted civilization. When you turn the rocks in the shade, when you scrape off the surface, the degradation and the madness are revealed.^x The inner city appears to be the most vile and vicious, yet Morrison claims there "exist the only real crowd life, street life, night life." In this "grimy ring," pretence and hypocrisy will not be found, but rather an open and spontaneous existence of "diseased specimens." While the inner city is marked by an overt perversion, the apparently boring and wholesome suburbs conceal an even much more twisted and corrupted sense of the "Pleasure Principle," covered up by a thin layer of appearances. The sickness and decay, however, not only leap out from underneath the rocks and dark holes of the grimy ring but is also present at the centre of the city, the "daylight business district." In this poem this part of the city is represented as dazzlingly clean, almost sterile. The district is not accompanied by a single qualifier, positive or negative, except for "sex." The entire district appears to be impenetrable for the reader in its immaculate brightness and is quick to draw the attention away from itself towards the ring around it, pointing out every single, neatly detailed sin, such as prostitution and "all-night cinemas." Notwithstanding the openly criminal nature of this area, the real corruption will be found at the very heart of the circle. Clean in the shiny, glaring glaze of the daylight business district, its operations function smoothly as the business district zone provides the motive, administrative force for the rest of the "mound" with which it is inextricably intertwined. The core of the circle functions as a regulator of the rest of the city, where the decision-making process stands at the basis of the widespread twisted perversion and corruption, which eventually trickle down into the rest of the "mound." The entire city is marked and surrounded by "Death," such as the "dying arcades which never die," yet the centre is qualified by "sex," that which creates life, and nothing else. A motion starts to appear from the seemingly bright, immaculate centre down towards the darkness and decay of the inner city, to finally disembody into the colourless yet radically perverted suburbs, and at the same time a countermotion of desire starts to appear as well. The diseased

specimens of the inner city are much more attracted by the bright core of sex in the business district than to the "ring of death" and they consequently fall easily under the spell of the centre. The opening line of the poem, and the entire volume, "Look where we worship" implies the temptation of the mysterious brightness of this centre of sex, which will inevitably become the object of worship through desire, even though no-one knows what forces are present inside the core of this circle.

Although bright and clean at the surface, the centre of the circle, the bright "daylight" district, turns out to be the centre of perversion too, contrasted with the "night life" areas who overtly exhibit their diseased specimens, and where the "real crowd" in their tangibleness manifest a high degree of authenticity and collusion with salubrious, intuitive instincts.ⁱⁱ Here we strike upon a second salient dichotomy threading through Morrison's poetry with a highly symbolic force: the day vs. the night. Interestingly enough, and this may appear somewhat counterintuitive for many, Morrison symbolizes the perverse and corrupt sickness through the image of the day, connecting it to such elements as light, heat, aridity and ultimately to modern civilization itself. The night accordingly symbolizes the natural, intuitive and the savage, connected to water, coolness, darkness and the wilderness. The connected symbols and the opposing worlds are distinctly juxtaposed in the following poem:

Crisp hot whiteness
City Noon
Occupants of plague zone
are consumed.

(Santa Ana's are winds off deserts.)

Rip up grating and splash in gutters.
The search for water, moisture,
"wetness" of the actor, lover.^{xi}

The diseased, civilized world is searching for water in the actor or lover and the search is separated from "the city" by the desert. Both the concept of the desert as well as the actor have great symbolic value within Morrison's poetry and their significance will be discussed later. Contrasting pairs such as Sex/Death and Night/Day reoccur with

indomitable ferocity throughout Morrison's poetry and are of paramount importance to it.

1.2 Greek Tragedy

To understand the origin of the disease and decay roaming through civilization and to understand crucial concepts such as *the Lords* and *the New Creatures*, which are basic to understand Morrison's poetry in general, we need to take a step back and look at Morrison's influences in their own light, since it is impossible, or at least extremely difficult, to understand Morrison's poetry without first understanding the works and ideas that influenced him. To decode Morrison's poetry, we need to recognize and clarify the philosophy that edifies and underlies its meaning, symbolism, imagery, and themes. The philosophy is primarily Nietzschean in origin, although the poetry is not singular in its allegiance to him. Rather, Morrison adapts variations of Nietzsche's philosophy along with ideas and theoretical concepts of other writers/thinkers in his verse, a process that is always radically intertwined with his own 20th century urbanized American experience.^{xii} While elements of many writers surface in his songs and poetry, Nietzsche's influence is prevalent in Morrison's work from his earliest poems and lyrics until the end. It is mainly Nietzsche's first major work, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1871), that had been a major influence on Morrison's life and poetics. More specifically, Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* serves as both a motivator for and an cocoon to Morrison's philosophy.^{xiii} Several members of *The Doors* and other biographers discuss Nietzsche's lasting influence on Morrison.^{xiv} Ray Manzarek, organist of The Doors, mentioned "walks in the soft shore break of Venice Beach discussing Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*"^{iv} with Morrison. Morrison himself revealingly suggests to New York Magazine reporter and writer Richard Goldstein in an interview that he should "read Nietzsche on the nature of tragedy to understand where he's really at. [Goldstein notes that] his eyes glow as he launches into a discussion of the Apollonian-Dionysian struggle for control of the life force."^{iv}

Nietzsche's famous theory of aesthetics concerning the Apollo-Dionysus dichotomy was introduced for the first time in *The Birth of Tragedy*, which describes the process of the emergence of the Attic drama in Ancient Greece. In Greek Mythology, after

the fall of the Titans and the rise of the Olympians, the Apollonian culture was given shape and the dawning of the Apollonian culture marked the end of the archaic Greek society and the beginning of the classical era. The worship culture of Apollo is connected to that of union with the overriding pattern of order and design unfolding in the universe, as Apollo is regarded as the god who endorses measure, moderation, social comity and conformity and deference to civic law.^{xv} In other words, the Apollonian culture refers to the implemented structure of society and culture and its preservation through moderation of emotions and the cultivation of its subjects, in their veneration of the god of civilization. The Apollonian society was above all a place, in Nietzsche's words, "where everything speaks only of over-brimming, indeed triumphant existence, where everything has been deified, regardless of whether it is good or evil."^{xvi} However, Nietzsche contrasts this "inexplicably serene" society with the earlier myth of Silenus, thereby uncovering a conflicting philosophical undercurrent.¹ What is revealed by this myth is that the Greeks were not merely the happy, ideal race with eloquent speeches and the luxury of white marble. A strong, truthful and painful pessimism resounds from the breast of Silenus, which is at odds with the Olympic world. This is the moment where the perfected world of the gods is juxtaposed against a mortal existence.^{xvii} In the light of the Silenus myth, Nietzsche states that "the Olympian magic mountain now opens up, as it were, and shows us its roots. The Greeks knew and felt the terrors and horrors of existence; in order to live at all they had to place in front of these things the resplendent, dream-born figures of the Olympians."^{xviii} This undercurrent is the most raw, Dionysian confrontation with the world possible, prompting an immediate negation of existence itself.^{xix} As it turns out, Grecian Apollonian culture suffered from similar terrors and anxieties as modern society; moreover, Nietzsche claims there was a pervading sense of madness amongst Grecian society, wondering whether "madness [is] perhaps not necessarily the symptom of degradation, of collapse, of cultural decadence?"^{xx} In his analysis of modern society, Morrison uncovers similar symptoms of madness roaming amply throughout civilization: "It takes large murder to turn rocks in the shade and

¹ There is an old legend that king Midas for a long time hunted the wise Silenus, the companion of Dionysus, in the forests, without catching him. When Silenus finally fell into the king's hands, the king asked what was the best thing of all for men, the very finest. The daemon remained silent, motionless and inflexible, until, compelled by the king, he finally broke out into shrill laughter and said these words, "Suffering creature, born for a day, child of accident and toil, why are you forcing me to say what would give you the greatest pleasure *not* to hear? The very best thing for you is totally unreachable: not to have been born, not to *exist*, to be *nothing*. The second best thing for you, however, is this — to die soon." (Daniels 2013: 45)

expose strange worms beneath. / The lives of our discontented madmen are revealed."^{xxi} In other words, the Apollonian Grecian culture seemed immersed in beauty and art on the surface, but when the rocks in the shade were turned, when they scraped off the surface, the degradation and madness was revealed. The Apollonian Greeks appeared to have lost something along the way which was keeping them sane, something essential to a balanced life. So they turned to that other god, Dionysus, to restore what once was lost, to reunite themselves with what Nietzsche calls "the mysterious primordial unity."^{xxii} This god is essentially identified as the god of drunkenness, intoxication, fertility, ecstasy and madness.^{2xxiii} Dionysus is the vigorously untamable, roaming god of the forests and the wilderness:

Under the magic of the Dionysian, not only does the bond between man and man lock itself in place once more, but also nature itself, no matter how alienated, hostile, or subjugated, rejoices again in her festival of reconciliation with her prodigal son, man. The earth freely offers up her gifts, and the beasts of prey from the rocks and the desert approach in peace.^{xxiv}

Through the Dionysian festivals, the *Bacchae*, the people from ancient Greece regained balance with the Apollonian society and they revived once more as "the glowing life of the Dionysian throng roar[ed]."^{xi} Such a balance appeared to be of vital importance: a person, or society, can never reside too long in one state or the other, for this would cause a dire and dangerous imbalance that eventually might end fatal. To Nietzsche, the Apollonian and Dionysian are foremost artistic forces, or *drives*, that manifest themselves as different forms of art: Apollonian art, such as epic poetry and sculpture, is beautiful, calming and sun-like in its charm, much like the appearances of Apollo himself; the art of Dionysus, on the other hand —most notably music, dance and lyrical poetry— is transfixing, orgiastic and intoxicating, delivering an effect akin to that which bewitched the Dionysian revelers. However, in their philosophical dimensions Nietzsche's characterizations of these two gods are in a dialectic relationship with the Schopenhauerian distinction between the world as will and as representation, and are seen as aestheticized forces of nature unmediated by the human subject.^{xxv} In short, what Nietzsche has done is to take the Grecian gods Apollo and Dionysus, extend their

² This refers to a different kind of madness, as will be explained later in this paper.

significance, raise it onto a symbolic plane, and then use these symbols as quasi-historical verities like the 'real' Grecian gods themselves.^{xxvi} Nietzsche's aesthetic system based on the Apollonian-Dionysian conflict will function as a guideline for the cultural conflict within Morrison's poetic urban society. Another similar conflict appears throughout his poetry, yet this one takes place on an individual, psychological level.

1.3 Psychoanalytical dimension of Grecian worship cultures

Due to the development of theoretical psychoanalysis during the 20th century, another dimension could be added to what these two Grecian gods are symbolizing. Nietzsche himself already gives impetus to a psychological symbolization and interpretation of these two duelling forces: "Nietzsche reads Apollo and Dionysus variously as states of consciousness (in creating as well as encountering their respective art forms), and also as psychological interactions of one with the other in the dialectical movement presented to us as the precursor to Attic tragedy."^{3xi} It was not until 1966, however, that this idea was met with by some members of the field of structural psychoanalysis. At the root of structural psychoanalytic theory is the recognition of what constitutes the parameters of the world into which the individual is born, i.e. the world of pairs of opposites. What is generated by the experience of living in the world is conflict, and what results is a desire to be free of that conflict, a desire which compels the individual to seek the transcendent.^{4xxvii} The Symbolic Order embodies the realm of shared cultural meaning, the world of language, signification and the social on the level of the individual. This realm of language is called the Symbolic in that every culture can be seen as a set of symbolic structures. In other words, it is the social world of linguistic communication, intersubjective relations, knowledge of ideological conventions, and the acceptance of the law and it could arguably be seen as the psychological manifestation of the Apollonian culture, which endorses comity and conformity and deference to civic law on a social level through the implemented structure of society and culture. Once a child enters into language and accepts the rules and dictates of society, it is able to deal and engage with others.^{xxviii} The acceptance of the grammatical and linguistic rules of

³ Yet again revealing the visionary qualities of Nietzsche's mind, who unfortunately didn't live to see his theory verified on a psychological plane.

⁴ Cfr. *infra*.

language is aligned with the Oedipus complex and it is therefore, according to Lacan, associated with the masculine, the law, and structure. The Symbolic is made possible because of one's acceptance of the Name-of-the-Father: those laws and restrictions that control the rules of communication. In other words, through recognition of the Name-of-the-Father, the child is able to enter into a community of others.^{xxix} In Lacan's words, the Symbolic, through language, is "the pact which links subjects together in one action. The human action *par excellence* is originally founded on the existence of the world of the symbol, namely on laws and contracts."^{xxx} Lacan conceived of the Symbolic Order as a totalizing concept in the sense that it marks the limit of the human universe. As individual subjects, we can never fully grasp the social or symbolic totality that constitutes the sum of our universe, but that totality has a structuring force upon us as subjects. We are born into language —the language through which the social realities of others are articulated and through which we are forced to articulate our own.^{xxxi} We are locked within what Lacan calls a circuit of discourse:

It is the discourse of the circuit in which I am integrated. I am one of its links. It is the discourse of my father, for instance, in so far as my father made mistakes which I am condemned to reproduce. . . . I am condemned to reproduce them because I am obliged to pick up again the discourse he bequeathed to me, not simply because I am his son, but because one can't stop the chain of discourse, and it is precisely my duty to transmit it in its aberrant form to someone else.^{xxxii}

For its counterpart we need to turn to one of Lacan's students, Julia Kristeva, who further developed and extended Lacan's concept of the Symbolic and set it up against the concept of the Semiotic, which

is closely related to the infantile pre-Oedipal referred to in the works of Freud. . . . and the Lacanian pre-mirror stage. It is an emotional field, tied to the instincts, which dwells in the fissures and prosody of language rather than in the denotative meanings of words. In this sense, the semiotic opposes the symbolic, which correlates words with meaning in a stricter, mathematical sense.^{xxxiii}

This earliest stage of linguistic development, which relates to the primal drives and instincts, is repressed once the child enters the realm of the Symbolic, meaning once the child is being cultivated by the structural social world around her/him.

As a result of this repression, Kristeva mentions the two further concepts: the *abject* and the *chora*. The abject, which is connected to the Freudian mechanism of repression, denial and repudiation, is one aspect of one's buried consciousness. Abjection is part of the earliest and forgotten struggle to separate the child, who is reluctant to recognize the realm of the Symbolic or the law of the Phallus, from the mother. Before the intervention of the Symbolic, there is a prior impulse compelled to expel the Mother, but the Symbolic (intervention of the Father between the mother and child) alone is not enough to ensure the separation.^{xxxiv} In order for the child to become detached from the mother, the Mother must be *abjected*: "The abject would thus be the object of primal repression."^{xxxv} The chora, on the other hand, is the (temporary or final) receptacle for that which has been repressed/abjected and is what remains of the Semiotic, the primal language of the Mother after the child is exposed to the Symbolic, the social language of the Father. In other words, the child's primal desires and instincts are scandalized and repressed once it falls under the influence of the Symbolic and these scandalized desires and instincts are, under pressure of its social environment, eventually suppressed by the child itself and stored away in what Kristeva, borrowing a term from Plato, calls the chora. Imagine the chora as a container, a place where the repressed desire is pent up. The chora can and might, of course, return, but it is held in tenuous check by the sign or the image the subject has formed Symbolically of itself.^{xxii} When consciousness enters the field of time and space it also enters, by definition, the field of conflict. Rather than connection there is separation, rather than unity there is duality. There is a cleavage between the structure and existence in this plane of language and opposites; it is cut off from its source, from participation and inherent comprehension of *what it is*, all of which exist outside the boundary of expression.^{xxxvi} Unlike the Symbolic Order could be seen as a psychological representation of the Apollonian culture, the Dionysian culture does not fully conflate/coincide with the Semiotic state. The Semiotic describes the state *before* an individual is regarded as such and thus not aware of its own subjectivity, and once the Oedipal border has been crossed, one can never truly return, but only engage in a mere simulation via the

subconscious. The chora can function as a temporal portal through which every individual can reconnect with her/his primal drives, thereby transitorily losing its subjectivity altogether. In the Dionysian ecstasy, the worshipper *temporarily* sacrifices her individuality (the Symbolic image of the self) to "the primordial unity," regaining what once was lost: a balance between the two forces.⁵ The interaction and inclusion of Nietzsche's aesthetic theory, Lacan/Kristeva's psychological development theory on the one hand and Morrison's poetry on the other will be highlighted and further explained over the course of this paper by means of several examples within various poems.

Now the two core dichotomies which embody the crux of Morrison's philosophy have been established: Apollo/Dionysus and Symbolic/Semiotic. These two pairs of opposites are caught in an eternal conflict stemming from the dialectical nature of their relation. This struggle and the desire for its resolution stand at the cradle of Morrison's entire philosophical model which constitutes the framework of his poetry. In short, Morrison's entire philosophy is a journey towards the temporary resolution of the conflict, meaning the harmony between on a social level the Apollonian and the Dionysian culture and on an individual, psychological level, the Symbolic and the Semiotic Order. Within his poetry, these two core dichotomies give birth to many more pairs of contrast; and those pairs will ultimately determine its poetic cadence. It is important to note that the Apollo/Dionysus and the Symbolic/Semiotic dichotomies, and indeed any apparent pair of contraries, are opposite sides of the same coin, two essential halves of one whole, rather than separate rivalling entities. In this light, the term 'duality' might be a more accurate description of the reciprocal relation of the two elements; hence I will refer to any of these pairs from here on as a duality instead of dichotomy. With regards to the origin of the pervasive sense of corruption, disease and decay, discussed in the beginning of this chapter, Morrison once states the following in a telling interview with Lizzie James:

Twentieth-century culture's disease is the inability to feel their reality. People cluster to TV, soap operas, movie, theatre, pop idols, and they have wild emotion

⁵It is highly unlikely, however, that Morrison had knowledge of the above-mentioned psychoanalytical concepts; notwithstanding, the parallels between Morrison's poetry and the considered theories are uncanny. He must have followed Nietzsche in the symbolization of states of consciousness and intuitively developed them, more or less simultaneously *nota bene*, in a similar manner as the psychoanalysts discussed.

over symbols. But in reality of their own lives, they're emotionally dead. They're TV – hypnotized. TV is the invisible protective shield against bare reality.^{xxxvii}

In a different interview, he makes a similar statement:

To me there's something incredibly sad about a bunch of human beings sitting down, watching something take place. When you think about it, . . . the spectacle of millions and millions of people sitting in movie theatres and in front of TV sets every night watching a second or third hand reproduction of reality going on, when the real world is right there in their living room, or right outside in the street or down the block somewhere. I think it's a tool to somnambulize or hypnotize people into kind of a waking sleep.^{xxxviii}

These two statements strongly echo Plato's cave allegory. In the allegory, Plato likens people untutored in the Theory of Forms to prisoners chained in a cave, unable to turn their heads. All they can see is the wall of the cave and behind them burns a fire. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a parapet, along which puppeteers can walk. The puppeteers, who are behind the prisoners, hold up puppets that cast shadows on the wall of the cave. The prisoners are unable to see these puppets, the real objects, that pass behind them. What the prisoners see and hear are shadows and echoes cast by objects that they do not see. Such prisoners would mistake these appearances for reality. They would think the things they see on the wall, the shadows were real and they would know nothing of the real causes of the shadows.^{xxxix} In the latter statement, Morrison refers to the hypnosis/somnambulism as a *tool*. It is therefore inexorably used *by* someone else, instead of it being a social phenomenon without an agent, in the same way the puppeteers from Plato's allegory hold up their puppets casting shadows for the prisoners to watch. Here we touch on the key element of Morrison's social accusation: through mass media, "books, concerts, galleries, shows, cinemas," people are blinded to what he calls their "enslavement," which for Morrison is not so much about a physical form of captivity, but a state of emotional and psychological oppression and dependence.⁶ Morrison claims this oppression stems from the so-called sins of the

⁶ Morrison often compared this mental oppression with William Blake's "mind-forg'd manacles." from the poem *London*. (Blake 1997: 26)

Father: the forcefully maintained, oppressive, patriarchal society. And the agents behind this mechanism of mass enslavement are those who reside in the mystery of the centre of the circle: *the Lords*.

1.4 The Lords of the City

The Lords. Events take place beyond our knowledge or control. Our lives are lived for us. We can only try to enslave others. But gradually, special perceptions are being developed. The idea of the "Lords" is beginning to form in some minds. We should enlist them into bands of perceivers to tour the labyrinth during their mysterious nocturnal appearances. The Lords have secret entrances, and they know disguises. But they give themselves away in minor ways. Too much glint of light in the eye. A wrong gesture. Too long and curious a glance.

The Lords appease us with images. They give us books, concerts, galleries, shows, cinemas. Especially the cinemas. Through art they confuse us and blind us to our enslavement. Art adorns our prison walls, keeps us silent and diverted and indifferent.^{xi}

The notion of *the Lords* is a philosophical construct and a poetic device used to distinguish society as hierarchical, invented by Morrison to unveil and demystify the mechanism of mass deception through art and idolatry.^{xli} These mechanisms are unerringly present in every sliver of society and they go, more often than not, unnoticed by those outside of the centre of the circle of our society, which Morrison often compares to a "labyrinth," to which these *Lords* "have secret entrances." *The Lords* are in control of society's "events," meaning its entire structure and organization, which all take place "beyond our knowledge." In other words, they transformed democratic society into a mediocracy, where a state of ignorance is installed and maintained through mass media, used to "keep us silent and diverted and indifferent." In this sense, Morrison's concept of *the Lords* is a generic term for the guardians of the structure of

our society, such as artists, leaders, celebrities, priests, etc. However, like almost every concept, symbol and theme present in Morrison's poetry, the idea of *the Lords* is highly disparate, ambiguous and elusive, regardless even of the fact that he later on blatantly contradicts himself. In the poem introducing this chapter, *the Lords* are presented as a seemingly homogenous group, but Morrison develops different individual outcomes over the course of his poetry. The first mention of the concept is in the poem printed above, where *the Lords* are still shrouded in "nocturnal" mystery, described as somehow intriguing creatures with a heavy "glint of light in the eye" and a "curious glance." But in a later poem, published in the volume *Wilderness*, when Morrison grants us a glance "above the mist," at least one of them has evolved from these rather elegant and intriguing beings to a detached, passive and repugnant monocrat:

I am a guide to the Labyrinth

Monarch of the protean towers
on this cool stone patio
above the iron mist
sunk in its own waste
breathing its own breath^{xlii}

Withal and by that same token, two other individual 'guides' pass over the course of Morrison's poetry, and will consequently appear over the course of this paper, too. As guardians of society's structure and organization, *the Lords* are part of the Symbolic Order, and therefore part of what is left of the Apollonian culture. As mentioned before in regard to the Apollo/Dionysus duality, one can never reside too long in one state or the other, since this would cause a dire and dangerous imbalance that eventually might end fatally, which is, according to Morrison, exactly what has been going on. TV, movies, pop idols, etc are all part of the Symbolic for which people have "wild emotion," yet they are "emotionally dead." The Symbolic repression of the primal drives and instincts has slowly abraded people's emotional and instinctive drives, and eventually makes them go wild over empty symbols such as TV stars and pop idols. In the Lizzie James interview, Morrison concludes that

we live in a sick society and part of the disease is not being aware that we're diseased.... Most people have no idea what they're missing. Our society places a

supreme value on control – We are, in effect, brought up to defend and perpetuate a society that deprives people of the freedom to feel.^{xliii}

Once again, Plato's shadow theory is very present in this quote. The process of "enslavement" and "deprivation" is activated from a very early age onwards; yet, strikingly, *the Lords* are not the ones enslaving people, they merely "appease us with images." They have organized social life in such a manner that people unknowingly enslave each other, seeing that "our lives are lived for us. We can / only try to enslave others." This imprisonment is not organized by an obscure, select group of power, but is inflicted upon the child by the parents, teachers, neighbours, even friends. For this very reason Morrison eventually claims that, in a way and without their knowledge, every individual alike is *secretly* part of *the Lords*, which is a more frightening realization:

Fear the Lords who are secret among us.

The Lords are w/ in us.

Born of sloth & cowardice.^{xliv}

With this short poem from Morrison's second volume (*The New Creatures*) he transforms the concepts of *the Lords* into a state of consciousness, parallel with the transformation of the Apollo/Dionysus duality. In that line of thought, *the Lords* are also those who have, whether consciously or not, accepted their masks as their faces out of "sloth & cowardice" and who now prod others in line. Morrison argues that all the social institutions create doctrines and systems that force people to live in a specific manner. The minute people accept those structures that others have imposed upon them, the perception of their proper identity and reality are inevitably created and controlled by those structures.^{xlv} This line of thought is a direct development of Nietzsche's acrid critique of the "herd mentality," which he defines as "the lower species, the sum of zeroes (herd, mass, society)."^{xlvi} Due to the herd instinct, Nietzsche claims, "the whole of existence is vulgarized: in so far as the mass is dominant it bullies the exceptions."^{xlvii} Nietzsche shows nothing but contempt throughout his writings for the 'herd' who diligently and complacently ensure that nothing disrupts the security of the social order.^{xlviii} In Morrison's poetry, this bullying has turned into a lifelong suppression of the 'exceptional.' The mass scale of this process explains for the putrefying amount of corruption and decay within Morrison's poetry, considering the resulting excessive predominance of the Symbolic Order. The minute an individual is pressured into the

Symbolic, her/his intuitive instincts and primal drives are repressed by the social and moral code of society. This forced entrance into the Symbolic is, according to Morrison, a kind of imprisonment of the individual's true Self.⁷ The result of this imprisonment is that an individual's original emotions, desires and instincts aren't channelled into a certain action of release but stored into the individual's chora, locked away deep within the subconscious. This mechanism has, after years of repressing and blocking such emotions, desires and instincts, only two possible outcomes: either the individual fully assimilates with the Symbolic Order and s/he "emotionally dies" or the subconscious starts to revolt against the oppressor:

The abject shatters the wall of repression and its judgments. It takes the ego back to its source on the abominable limits from which, in order to be, the ego has broken away—it assigns it a source in the non-ego, drive, and death. Abjection is a resurrection that has gone through death (of the ego). It is an alchemy that transforms death drive into a start of life, of new significance. And so, the abject is related to perversion, because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts.^{xlix}

When the abject, the collection of repressed emotions, desires and instincts, has been built up to the point it is no longer tenable, according to Kristeva, a certain amount of individuals will cave under its pressure, resulting in an overwhelming wave of (sexual) violence or perversion. If we compare Kristeva's theory on the abject with the following statement of Morrison, a very similar pattern can be detected:

When natural energy and impulses are too severely suppressed for too long, when people are blocking them from coming out, they become violent. It's natural for something that's been held under pressure to become violent in its release.¹

⁷ During the Lizzie James interview, Morrison clarifies about how the gradual repression and ultimate enslavement specifically takes place: "When others demand that we become the people they want us to be, they force us to destroy the person we really are. They demand that we show only the feelings they want and expect from us. You trade in your reality for a role. You trade in your senses for an act. You give up your ability to feel, and in exchange, put on a mask. It's true, we're locked in an image, an act – and the sad thing is, people get so used to their image – they grow attached to their masks." (James 1981)

Morrison argues that the natural impulse of desire should flow without impediments of government by conditions of Symbolic Law, demonstrating effectively that when Symbolic Law does govern, the consequences are an exacerbation of the separation and conflict felt by the individual. Taking this line of thought further, he then transfers the disease of the individual to culture as a whole. His mythography is a dialogue of returning to balance, and this return begins with understanding the desire for the mother.^{li} Over time, there is a steady repression of the maternal element in favour of a political and social rationality of the subject and of society. The abject becomes the dark side of the ego: the ambiguous, the in-between, the unassailable; in other words, all that has had to be repressed for the subject to be separated from the mother and to enter into society. But even though it is deposited in the chora, the abject defies boundaries, is resistant to unity, and disturbs the identity, order, and system that is necessary to create the subject. To maintain these tenuous boundaries, the abject is objectified or projected forward and away onto, as Kristeva said, the corpse, waste, filth, the traitor, the liar, the criminal, the rapist, the hypocrite, the amoralist and other social undesirables.^{lii} For example, according to Morrison, when it comes to sex or the body in general, people are taught that it is something shameful to control or dominate and consequently, most people are so bound with pretences they can hardly move and they are too battered with rules for natural instincts to be heard. Morrison claims that we cripple ourselves with lies when you reject your body; it becomes your prison cell.^{liii} The frustrations of being captured within narrow, puritan, social laws often result in violent sexual assaults and a blossoming of prostitution networks. Sexual violence and perversion are external symptoms of the internal revolt of the abject, which has become explosive in its release. Openly indulging in these outbursts is condemned by society and consequently, the social undesirables who do openly indulge in such perversions are marginalized into a "grimy ring immediately surrounding the daylight business district." Yet, those undesirables are, through the unabashed profligacy of the abject's revolt, more connected with the subconscious and the Semiotic and therefore slightly more in balance than, for example, people in the 'wholesome' suburbs, who are secretly nurturing their own perversions (such as child prostitution). However, in spite of their feeble connection with the Semiotic, these social degenerates, the "real crowd," are still part of the city, of the Symbolic Order. Morrison claims such waves of violence and

perversion aren't necessarily successful acts of resistance, but rather often a different, less openly manifested, form of assimilation of a subject with the Symbolic:

However, violence isn't always evil. What's evil is the infatuation with violence. A person who is too severely suppressed experiences so much pleasure in those violent releases, probably rare and brief that he becomes infatuated with violence. *So they attach themselves* to processed violence, out of cans. But then the real source of evil isn't the violence – or the infatuation with it – but the repressive forces.^{liv8}

The people behind these repressive forces are, as previously pointed out, *the Lords*, who abuse the Symbolic Order for their personal ambitions. What Morrison describes here is the mechanism behind the inner city people's desire towards and worship of the centre of the circle, albeit they will never reach it. Although they are "the real crowd" of the city, most in tune with their original emotions and instincts, in the end they are as much part of that city as the suburbs or the centre of it.

Some scholars have connected Morrison's concept of *the Lords* with Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermensch*; this is, however tempting, a false parallel.^{lv} On the surface they may occur as similar in their distinction from the "herd," which is further amplified by the fact that Nietzsche's description of the *Übermensch* as "masters of the earth" (orig. German "Herren der Erde") has become "Lords of the earth" in some translations. However, when one analytically compares the concepts of the two writers, linking them to each other will soon enough appear philosophically unsustainable. Nietzsche designed his *Übermensch*, or "creators" as Zarathustra calls them, in order to liberate others from the herd instinct and show them the way to unleash their human potential for greatness. The *Übermensch* is "the one who is willing to risk all for the sake of the enhancement of humanity."^{lvi} Morrison's *Lords*, on the other hand, are abusing this inborn herd instinct to further enslave and control the "common man." In this respect, Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and Morrison's *Lords* are not similar at all, but prove to be diagonal opposites of one another, with the "herd" in between. Interestingly enough, the first mention Morrison makes of *the Lords* is only at the very end of the volume, after

⁸ Italics mine

having described the entire universe of the city, which further reinforces the claim that these *Lords* are hidden and mysterious creatures whose existence is not commonly known by their subjects. On top of that, *the Lords* is one of the concepts that Morrison would eventually come to undermine, contradict and transform in the development of endless and dense variation. Initially he invented *the Lords* as a poetical device to explain

the feeling of powerlessness and helplessness that people have in the face of reality. [They] have no real control over events or their own lives. Something is controlling them. The closest they ever get is the television set. In creating this idea of the lords, it also came to reverse itself. Now to me, the lords mean something entirely different. I couldn't really explain. It's like the opposite. Somehow the lords are a romantic race of people who have found a way to control their environment and their own lives. They're somehow different from other people.^{lvii}

Even in this new and transformed meaning, however, *the Lords* do not resemble Nietzsche's *Übermensch* since they do not show any effort or willingness to guide the others toward the same abilities as "masters of the earth." How this new and transformed idea of *the Lords* relates to the rest of "the mound" or where Morrison was going with this transformation is, however, impossible to tell due to his premature death in 1971. Maybe Morrison was aiming at slowly developing them towards the *Übermensch* to explain their power, maybe it was nothing more than a random thought in a drunken conversation; yet most likely, none of the above. Whatever it was, he took it to his grave.

1.5 The Symbolic dominance

According to Morrison, modern man lives in a society which has fallen ill and corrupt, is immersed in "sophisticated vice" and inhabited by "diseased specimens."⁹ According to Nietzsche, the seed of society's gradual decline into decadence and corruption, however, was planted as early as classical antiquity.^{lviii} The fifth century BC

⁹ See p. 20 of this paper

was Greece's golden age of enlightenment. Sophocles, second of the Three Attic Tragedians, was contemporary to some extraordinary minds. When Sophocles' most famous play, *Oedipus Rex*, was staged, Socrates, who was the great anti-tragedian, the great anti-aesthete, and the catalyst (along with Euripides) for the decline and death of tragedy, had just turned forty.^{lix} Western civilization stood at the crossroads of religion and reason, passion and order, night and day, Dionysus and Apollo: the gods were beginning their exit as reason and science commenced their triumphant march.^{10lx} Significantly, around the period of Sophocles' death, Plato started writing his first dialogues. Even though Apollo's worship culture slowly started to fade along with the other gods and their entire mythology, his legacy and reign over man's civilized culture never ceased. Apollo's heritage of "measure, moderation, social comity and conformity and deference to civic law" remained intact but *he* gradually disappeared from the stage as the god embodying divine beauty from deep myths.^{lxi} Since the Dionysus cult inevitably vanished from man's memory as well, the Apollonian world, once vibrating with beauty and grace gradually lost all of its brilliance, inasmuch as the Apollonian culture needs its Dionysian counterpart, which functioned as a mythmaking fertilizer, to constantly reinvigorate its vitality. The entrance of reason coincided with the exit of myth: the post-Socratic philosophers attempted to rationalise the world leaving no room for the tragic and instinctive in human life. According to Nietzsche, what was instinctive, healthy and creative in life was repressed, and it was this instinct which was the source for the creation of myths. Myth was the product of the irrational, Dionysian force.^{lxii} Starting in the 5th century B.C. in Greece, the process of demythologization quickly developed and spread over the classical Mediterranean world. Nietzsche amply described the consequences of this process in *The Birth of Tragedy*:

Yet every culture that has lost myth has lost, by the same token, its natural, healthy creativity. Only a horizon ringed about with myths can unify a culture. The forces of imagination and of the Apollonian dream are saved only by myth from indiscriminate rambling. The images of myth must be the unseen, omnipresent, daemonic sentries.^{lxiii}

¹⁰ The Chorus in *Oedipus Rex* significantly proclaims: "They are dying, the old oracles sent to Laius, / Now our masters strike them off the rolls. / Nowhere Apollo's golden glory now – / The gods, the gods go down." (Sophocles l. 1030-1033)

Nietzsche here refers to a unified culture where individuals live in balance and harmony with themselves and others. This specifically means that they live within the cultural and social system, yet in accord with their natural, original desires, instincts and emotions. Such is a culture of unity instead of a culture of conflict, which characterizes a demythologized, Symbolic society. Gradually, less and less of the "primordial unity" and "natural, healthy creativity" would find its way to the people of Antiquity and, as a result, more and more of decadence and decay was seeping in through the cracks. Over time, as the Apollonian culture became the dominant culture, the Symbolic completely overruled the Semiotic, utterly speeding up the process of decay. During the 19th century, the idea that decadence and cultural decay stood at the cradle of the ultimate collapse of the Roman Empire had become very popular:

Between Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (completed in 1788) and the richly representative painting of *The Romans of Decadence* by Thomas Couture (*Les Romains de la décadence*, 1847), notions of decadence indeed center on the Roman Empire as the paradigmatic instance; and in both that panoramic history by Gibbon and that sharply delineated painting by Couture we find a piquant juxtaposition of corrupt Empire with a lost world of heroic virtue, essentially the "old Roman virtue," the *priscavirtus Romana*, proclaimed by Roman moralists themselves as an attested, or mythical, ideal of early Rome.^{lxiv}

This is indeed a very one-sided and romantic vision of Antique history, yet, as a symbol of imbalance, it fitted surprisingly well into Nietzsche's philosophical aesthetics. Morrison, too, picked up on the idea of the collapse of the once magnificent and vast Roman Empire due to cultural decline and decadence, and identified the autocracy of the Symbolic Order as the root cause, repressing the once equally rich and magnificent creative and mythological drive of the Empire. However, both Nietzsche and Morrison merely symbolically stage the decadence in Rome as the leading cause for its collapse to shed light on the fundamental imbalance which had slowly come to exist throughout Antiquity; they do not suggest a naïve, historical cliché as an explanation for a highly complex and multi-layered geopolitical process. As a poetic symbol, nevertheless, the idea is unambiguously clear in its functionality. Deprived of its mesmerizing grandeur,

the Apollonian culture was rotting away in the degeneration and cultural decadence of the late Roman Empire:

In Rome, prostitutes were exhibited on roofs
above the public highways for the dubious
hygiene of loose tides of men whose potential
lust endangered the fragile order of power.
It is even reported that patrician ladies, masked
and naked, sometimes offered themselves up to
these deprived eyes for public excitements of
their own.^{lxv}

Those "loose tides of men" are masses of people who, "deprived" of their natural, original desires after years of Symbolic dominant suppression, are struck by violent outbursts of those suppressed desires, triggered by the abject bursting out of its prison cell deep within the subconscious. To protect the Symbolic Order, "the fragile order of power," against these waves of violent social undesirables, the people in power offered up prostitutes as an outlet for such desires. Yet strikingly, not only social undesirables would manifest symptoms of perversion, but also patrician ladies—symbolizing people in power—reportedly disguised themselves as prostitutes to channel repressed desires and "excitements of their own." Within Morrison's cultural paradigm, throughout the 4th century A.D. the cultural decadence and decay in the Roman Empire rose steadfast at a dazzling pace. With no more access to the Semiotic and under a mere shade of what once was the Apollonian culture, the suppressed desires and impulses of its citizens kept on piling up to amounts beyond the imaginable. In spite of initiatives such as the offering of prostitutes serving as outlets, Roman rulers could not put a hold on the rapid decline. Towards the end of the 4th century, the (Western) Roman Empire indubitably collapsed.

According to Nietzsche, and Morrison after him, the same process of demythologization loomed over mankind a second time in the European age of Enlightenment, some 20 centuries after its Greek predecessor. Once again, man stood at the crossroads of religion and reason, passion and order, night and day, Dionysus and Apollo, and once again man decided to take only one path instead of maintaining a fine balance between the two. It was during the Enlightenment, that glorification of reason which dominated the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in Europe, that a

systematic attempt was made to explain away mythology.^{lxvi} For quite some time, as a result of Enlightenment progressive views, myths were disparaged as superstitious and as something that needed to be overcome so as to give way to a 'rationalised' society. Parallel to the process of demythologization in classical Antiquity, European society became more and more entangled in the process of explaining away myth with reason and subsequently the process of repressing the drives and urges that lie at the basis of mythmaking. The prevalent myth of modernity which concerned Nietzsche was related to science. It was believed that science was the ultimate tool which could find the answers to all the questions humanity posed: it had, by the nineteenth century, achieved a status which placed it at the pinnacle of knowledge. Nietzsche believed that science could neither find the answers to the fundamental questions of humanity nor provide the basis for the rejuvenation of culture. Despite the 'mythical' belief in science modern culture was proudly anti-mythical, considering itself as having progressed by liberating itself from the classical age. It is therefore the world of modernity which is the object of Nietzsche's critique. Modern Enlightened culture had lost the power to produce myths, it lost the mythical potential which was inherent among the Greeks:

What is revealed in the immense historical need of this dissatisfied modern culture, the gathering up of countless other cultures, the consuming desire to know, if not the loss of myth, the loss of the mythic homeland, of the mythic maternal womb.^{lxvii}

The value of myth was that of bringing together a people: with myth, a culture had a common foundation from which it could draw the strength to overcome the limitations and fragmentation produced by the branches of knowledge. In fact, myths have proven to be of such importance that Joseph Campbell has conflated them with the emergence of humans as a species:

Mythology is apparently coeval with mankind. As far back, that is to say, as we have been able to follow the broken, scattered, earliest evidences of the emergence of our species, signs have been found which indicate that mythological aims and concerns were already shaping the arts and world of *Homo sapiens*. Such evidences tell us something, furthermore, of the unity of our species; for the

fundamental themes of mythological thought have remained constant and universal, not only throughout history, but also over the whole extent of mankind's occupation of the earth.^{lxviii}

The negative evaluation of myth by modernity is correlated by Nietzsche to modernity's over-valorisation of reason. However, it should be pointed out that Nietzsche is not caught in the performative contradiction of condemning reason with rational means. Rather, the 'error of modernity' is its obsession with the rational at the expense of the instinctive that is central to his critique. Within the context of Nietzsche's philosophy, myths provided the vital purpose of serving as models for the life affirming culture he had in mind, a culture which generated the creativity of the individual.^{lxix} However, Nietzsche realized that simply adopting ancient Grecian pagan myths would prove modern society useless and, frankly, quite ridiculous. He knew that it was not possible, not even desirable to return to the mythology of the Classical age. What was needed instead was the creation of a new mythology that would serve the modern world. The disclosive power of myth is the condition for the possibility of reviving culture from its deteriorating condition.^{lxx} In short, the modern world was in need of a new mythology which was rooted in the ancient rituals that had been so vital to its mythology. In attempting to formulate a new method for the mythmaking process, Morrison distinctly leaves the path of Nietzschean philosophy to provide an answer etched for his immediate environment. Where Nietzsche called out for a new mythology inspired by the ancient Grecian worship cultures to revive European society, Morrison turned instead to the American past: the Native American tribal worship cultures such as North-American Indians and Aztecs; even African tribes are implied now and again.¹¹ The conscious choice of Morrison to draw inspiration from the American continent accordingly suits his goal to write a new mythology for mid-20th century American society. Yet, before the exploration of Morrison's adapted mythmaking rituals and the resulting modern mythology, I will discuss and analyze Morrison's detailed analysis and elaborate descriptions of mid-20th century American society under the Symbolic oppressive reign of *The Lords*, as represented and symbolized in his poetry through the city.

¹¹ See chapter 4 of this paper.

Chapter 2: Life inside the City

What sacrifice, at what price can the city be born?

[page break]

There are no longer "dancers," the possessed.
The cleavage of men into actor and spectators
is the central fact of our time. We are obsessed
with heroes who live for us and whom we punish.
If all the radios and televisions were deprived
of their sources of power, all books and paintings
burned tomorrow, all shows and cinemas closed,
all the arts of vicarious existence...

We are content with the "given" in sensation's
quest. We have been metamorphosised from a
mad body dancing on hillsides to a pair of eyes
staring in the dark.^{lxxi}

Morrison's social analysis and accusation are voiced in this particular poem in a manner both accurate and powerful, yet concise and profound in the clarity of expression, imagery and tone.^{lxxii} The poem opens with a grave sense of loss, omnipresent in Morrison's poetry, especially in the volume of *The Lords*. The first line of the poem wonders about the "price" and "sacrifice" man has made. And the price was high: no longer "possessed" of the Semiotic, no longer "mad bod[ies] dancing" under the spell of the Dionysian, mankind ripped apart into a "cleavage of ... actors and spectators." From then on, society was run and maintained as a "cleavage," where one side performs "arts of vicarious existence" for the people on the other side, which are ultimately diminished to "a pair of eyes staring in the dark," since they only live through the arts presented to them. The Symbolic arts vicariously live their existence for them. The reason I value this poem as powerful, yet concise is because Morrison sums up and combines several key elements of his poetics into one relatively short poem. The "sensation's quest" he mentions refers to an urging thirst for new and fresh experiences and perceptions, actively searching and probing them before moving on to the next thing; in short, the exact opposite behavior of "being content with the "given." Morrison then takes a most extreme stance on art, wondering whether its destruction could relieve man from the "mind-forg'd manacles." Yet, as an artist, the thought is too

horrible to even complete, thereby abruptly aborting the rest of the sentence. Furthermore, the "heroes who live for us and whom we punish" are scapegoated by their worshippers; a mechanism Morrison intensively investigated throughout his life and writings. And finally, he mentions the idea of 'metamorphosis,' which is one of the central themes to Morrison's poetics and will be discussed in a later chapter. Aside from introducing several of the key elements of his poetry within this one poem, Morrison also sums up most of the elements that characterize life inside the city: art, especially T.V. and cinema; its spectators; eyes or vision; and actors. All of these elements will receive in-depth analyses over the course of this chapter. As mentioned in the beginning of this paper, what at first seem like several unrelated, cryptic poems appear after multiple readings as a vast network of poems and symbols within poems creating an entire urban universe.

2.1 Vision & Death

Morrison's debut volume *The Lords* is significantly subtitled *Notes on Vision*.^{lxxiii} Written while he attended UCLA, Morrison "described the work as a thesis on film esthetics."^{lxxiv} But this text is far more than that, for it specifically provides his manifesto for transcendence whilst exploring a number of the crucial concerns of his mythography. Opening with an invitation to "look,"¹² for the duration of this text, vision is one of the driving forces. Vision is located within an array of sources, the most immediate and organic being the eyes through which every individual, human and animal, views the world. Of the five physical senses, four tend to take a secondary role to that of vision; it overrides the primary sense of touch experienced by the pre- and post-natal infant.^{lxxv} Vision is connected to the mind and to reason, whereas the primal senses of touch, taste, smell and sound are connected to more primitive, pre-Oedipal drives. Upon realizing, upon witnessing the difference in self and sex, commonly referred to as the mirror stage, the child has entered the Symbolic realm. The connection between the field of vision and sexual difference takes place on the level of the drive. The way in which Lacan defines masculinity and femininity coincides with this split to the extent that the two sexes, or better their appearance in the Symbolic Order, involve a similar structure of deception, of masquerade.^{lxxvi} Vision is, therefore, the primary sense of the Symbolic, and it is

¹² See p. 5 of this paper.

equally through vision as through language that the child is separated from the mother and introduced into the Symbolic order. Blinded when opening its eyes for the first time, the child experiences a kind of trauma, further reinforced when it first sees the image of its mother's face as a separate being:

Imagery is born of loss. Loss of the "friendly expanses." The breast is removed and the face imposes its cold, curious, forceful, and inscrutable presence.^{lxxvii}

Lacan connects vision to an inherent notion of loss as well. In his seminars on vision, he explains that the gaze stands for something that is radically lost to what is described as the geometrical vision of the eye and, by extension, to consciousness itself. Like the unconscious, the gaze reveals itself only to an oblique approach. He pinpoints the discordance between eye and gaze with the phrase "what I look at is never what I wish to see." He furthermore defines that what appears missing as the *object a*: "The *objet a* is something from which the subject, in order to constitute itself, has separated itself off as organ. This serves as a symbol of the lack, that is to say, of the phallus, not as such, but in so far as it is lacking."^{lxxviii} The separation from the mother is the first and often traumatizing experience of loss. The child loses its "friendly expanses," its protective areas of safety, such as the breast which feeds it. Now instead of the nurturing breast, a "cold" and "forceful" face is met with. As the child grows, and as the poem continues, the separation grows too; the connection to the mother has become exclusively visual:

You may enjoy life from afar. You may look at
things but not taste them. You may caress
the mother only with the eyes.

[page break]

You cannot touch these phantoms.^{lxxix}

The initial trauma has further developed into a desire to return to the "friendly expanses," and to the Semiotic state of safety and connection over all. Yet, the object of desire, which once nurtured the child with care and safety, has turned into a phantom, a mere shadow of its original nature due to the separation from the child. Both the mother and the child relish in the unity of their existence, yet vision is the path of conflict which breaks this bond, for it is through vision that the individual is validated in the Symbolic

world. It can be argued that in the absence of connection to the mother, coupled with the dominance of the visual ordering of the world which asserts when the individual disengages from her/his mother, the voyeur¹³ naturally pursues activities related to sex and other socially secretive activities. As famous Austrian-Hungarian neurologist, and founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud proposes in *Totem and Taboo*, early in life when the child responds to her/his desire to touch his own body and the “external prohibition,” usually from a parent. The conflict that develops in the child contributes in relocating rather than extinguishing the desire to touch.^{lxxx} This desire, rather than remaining in the upper, conscious mind, is influenced by the laws into which the individual is being invested by the Symbolic world around her/him, moving it to the subconscious, which, of course, is the realm of the Semiotic, of desire and touch. The sought for relief from the Symbolic may therefore be found through desire and touch; in short, through sex. Yet one only “may look at things but not taste them.” It can be argued that in the absence of connection to the mother, coupled with the dominance of the visual ordering of the world which asserts when the child disengages from its mother, the individual develops an inclination towards violence and death.^{lxxxi} In violence and death, the individual will find a relief which is not similar to the relief s/he would experience once reconnected with her/his original desires, yet a relief nonetheless. It is therefore not surprising that certain individuals will actively seek out this kind of relief through acts of violence, even murder. Vision is the device of the killer, and the individual will find a tremendous amount of power within the killer's predilection for death:

The sniper's rifle is an extension of his eye. He kills with injurious vision.^{lxxxii}

To further distance the assassin from those he seeks out with his vision, the sight is magnifying what he sees. With this focus the target is not only easier to see, but also more objectified. Yet in dealing out death the sniper, indeed any killer, can bring release and for some, relief.^{lxxxiii} However, even these temporary violent, yet deadly outbursts will not stop or reverse separation. The individual is entirely powerless over this process as s/he is watching the world around her/him turn to shadows. Eventually, inevitably, there will be an utter end of participation and Semiotic connection, when only Symbolic vision is left:

¹³ Cfr. *Infra*

The body
exists for the sake of the eyes; it becomes a
dry stalk to support these two soft insatiable
jewels.^{lxxxiv}

The body, common host to desires and instincts, has been diminished to a carrier, a "dry stalk," of the eyes and the mind, representing the Symbolic.¹⁴ There are only a few possible ways for the individual to escape the Symbolic at this point; one of which is sleep. In a dream state, the individual is strongly connected to her/his subconscious, the "under-ocean," and may revisit or recreate a safe world of Semiotic participation. These escapes from the Symbolic will inevitably be limited in time and upon waking up, the individual is painfully faced with the harsh (Symbolic) reality again. In such a momentary state of disillusionment, one might be tempted to follow Oedipus in his brutal act of despair:

Sleep is an under-ocean dipped into each night.
At morning, awake dripping, gasping, eyes
stinging. . . .

Nothing. The air outside
burns my eyes.
I'll pull them out
and get rid of the burning.^{lxxxv}

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the subconscious dream world is connected to water and darkness, and these "thematic resonances" associate all the way to the Dionysian and the Semiotic. Despite the dire circumstances within the city, it is possible for the inner city people to turn vision to a healthier purpose, which could make a modest reconnection possible, which might rescue them for the time being from being swallowed by what Morrison calls the "swarming masses."

2.2 Vision & Life

Notwithstanding the Symbolic dominance within *the city*, it is possible, as mentioned in the first and second chapter, to preserve a slight connection in participation with the impulse of life. Such a connection can be installed on following

¹⁴Although desire and instinct stem from the brain and not the body, the body nonetheless is often used to symbolize them within the Apollonian-Dionysian duality of body-mind.

and indulging in one's desires. This could be a desire for violence as seen in the previous subchapter, but a stronger connection will be established if one turns her/his vision not to death, but to life; in other words, to sex. The second major theme that marks existence within the city is the *voyeur*, the "pair of eyes staring in the dark," the one that watches from a distance without participating in the events observed. The voyeur naturally pursues activities related to sex and other socially secretive activities.^{lxxxvi} Morrison's notion of the voyeur is, once again, highly ambiguous, in that they can preserve a slight connection through the impulse of sex, yet will not create a connection as strong as experiencing the act itself through, for example, prostitution, which on its turn will not be nearly significant enough to bring one closer to transcendence. The voyeur can be found among the other social undesirables hiding in the darkness of the "grimy ring," yet will not participate in the acts of perversion but merely observe them:

The voyeur, the peeper, the Peeping Tom, is a dark
comedian. He is repulsive in his dark anonymity,
in his secret invasion. He is pitifully alone.
But, strangely, he is able through this same silence
and concealment to make unknowing partner of
anyone
within his eye's range. This is his threat and
power.^{lxxxvii}

In this short poem Morrison reveals another one of his major influences: the notorious French playwright and essayist Antonin Artaud. Morrison's poem strangely echoes the first lines of the essay *Theatre and Cruelty*:

An idea of the theater has been lost. And as long as the theater limits itself to showing us intimate scenes from the lives of a few puppets, transforming the public into Peeping Toms, it is no wonder the elite abandon it and the great public looks to the movies, the music hall or the circus for violent satisfactions, whose intentions do not deceive them.^{lxxxviii}

Yet while Artaud ascribed a dulling and deteriorating effect to theatre and a non-deceiving, violent and satisfying effect to the new mass media, Morrison has turned these characteristics around 180° on transforming the idea. For Morrison, writing in the 60's, the new mass media have said dulling and deteriorating effect on its public, and

In the poem preceding the one in discussion, Morrison states that not only the author, but every other human being, is in a way related to the voyeur:

43

and thus heavily draws attention to one specific word from the entire grammatical unit: emotional. The voyeur is most of all human beings' emotional stance before the Apollonian world around us, slowly tormenting and agonizing them. This interpretation is further reinforced by the desperate outcry —"we seek to break this spell of passivity"— in the next line. The enjambment after the verb "to break" especially draws all the focus to the emotional breakdown of the inner city people, which consequently receives the full weight of the line, breaking off in the middle of it. The state of "passivity" is immediately juxtaposed with the word "actions" to convey yet another breaking point, yet these actions in their turn are immediately torn down and identified as "cruel, awkward and generally obscene." Within these two poems, the author seems to sketch a forbearing portrait of the voyeur as the outcome of an internal conflict or struggle which, according to Morrison, every human being is faced with. At other times, however, he seems to be a lot less merciful in his judgement and depiction of the voyeur, even within the same poem:

There are no glass houses. The shades are drawn
and "real" life begins. Some activities are impossible
in the open. And these secret events are the voyeur's
game. He seeks them out with his myriad army of
eyes—like the child's notion of a Deity who sees
all. "Everything?" asks the child. "Yes, every-
thing," they answer, and the child is left to cope
with this divine intrusion.^{xc}

This is the second part of the poem "The voyeur, the peeper, the Peeping Tom, is a dark comedian" and the tone and attitude of the author towards the voyeur has shifted significantly from patient and understanding to its usual distant tone. Yet, from underneath its distant discourse, subtle signs of disgust seem to reach the poem's surface. The voyeur is depicted as a lot more active and self-confident, even aggressive. He no longer "seeks to break the spell of passivity," but decided to actively divulge in his perversion, which is once again qualified as the ""real" life," taking place in the dark, behind shades. This (proudly) perverted image of the voyeur also returns in the idea of the voyeur as masturbator:

The voyeur is masturbator, the mirror his badge,
the window his prey.^{xc1}

The voyeur, the hidden masturbator now "seeks" secret events, activities which are impossible in the open, and he seeks them "with his myriad army of eyes." Morrison here metaphorically attributes the voyeur with compound eyes, which are eyes consisting of an array of numerous small visual units, thereby connecting it to certain insects such as flies. The meaning and symbolism of the insectal metaphors and images within Morrison's poetry is quite elusive and consequently hard to pin down, yet these images are of significant importance to the delineation of its characters. The inhabitants of the city, and the entire city as a whole, are often connected or compared to insectoid creatures and features. The structure of the city is, according to Morrison, similar to the societal organization of eusocial insects and is often referred to in such vocabulary:

The City. Hive, Web, or severed
insect mound. All citizens heirs
of the same royal parent.^{xcii}

Furthermore, instances of individual characters or crowds of people connected with insects are manifold in *The Lords*, yet I will limit myself to the following two examples:

The assassin (?), in flight, gravitated with
unconscious, instinctual insect ease, moth-
like, toward a zone of safety, haven from the
swarming streets. Quickly, he was devoured
in the warm, dark, silent maw of the physical
theater.^{xciii}

And

Camera, as all-seeing god, satisfies our longing
for omniscience. To spy on others from this
height and angle: pedestrians pass in and out of
our lens like rare aquatic insects.^{xciv}

Somehow, a triangular interplay between the elements of 1) the city under Symbolic dominance, 2) theatre/cinema and 3) insectoid beings seem to arise from Morrison's poetry. The strange correlation between these three cornerstone elements is not always clear and univocal, yet certain distinct tendencies become apparent after close reading the volume. The first tendency is the obvious metaphor of the hierarchal social structure of eusocial insects living in a colony with a single breeding female and related, reproductively suppressed, workers and soldiers: "All citizens [of the city] heir to its

royal parents." The reproductive element within the metaphor then is further symbolizing 'power,' meaning that in Morrison's *city*, not reproductivity will be the exclusive privilege of the rulers, but control, as they are suppressing and denying their citizens' desire to have power and control over their own lives. The second tendency is less overt and conspicuous. Some scholars have seen a positive natural connection in Morrison's extensive analogy in that insects are creatures in accord with their natural instincts and drives — "unconscious, instinctual insect ease" — and therefore the humans on the other side of the analogy must have mentioned traits in common with them.^{xcv} This, however, seems like a flawed reading of the analogy, given the fact that eusocial insects are *naturally* designed to live in colonies obeying one or a few rulers, but such behaviour was considered as *unnatural* for humans by the majority of philosophers, artists and revolutionaries in the 60's, including Morrison. Additionally, Morrison often describes large crowds of people as "swarming streets," slaving and toiling away for a purpose unknown or unbenefited by them.^{xcvi} The other element, the camera or cinema, provides people with the illusion that they are the ones spying on others from a great distance, satisfying "our longing for omniscience," yet in reality, cinema moulds its spectators into the same swarm of "aquatic insects" they are observing from a great height.^{xcvii} Only the killer, the assassin, is characterized as distinct from the swarming crowd. The killer is also likened to an insect. Not, however, to a bee or an ant, but to a moth. As a loner, nocturnal insect, the moth might not be the most adequate metaphor for regular or natural human behaviour, but it somehow seems more individually valuable than the life of an ant. As a nocturnal insect, the moth is symbolizing the killer's (slight) connection with her/his natural impulses, as he gravitates "with unconscious, instinctual insect ease." He flees from the swarming crowd not to be "devoured" by their homogeneity, yet he flew into a (movie?) theatre and was most likely morphed into the rest of the swarm. No matter how much they might try to flee, the killer, if he does not rip out his own eyes, and the voyeur all eventually, inevitably, become part of the same crowd, the spectator; and increasingly so, as the reach of cinema expands.

2.3 Cinema & Death

Beyond the biological vision of eyes, the other significant lens is that of the camera, whether it is used for stills or motion picture. As optical devices, the biological eye and the camera lens function in a similar way, but are formed from opposing bases. The eye is biological, created by the natural impulse of life, the camera is mechanical, created by the realm of law and language. In short, one inhabits the realm of the Semiotic and the other the realm of the Symbolic.^{xcviii} The killer and especially the voyeur, however morally misguided and tragic their fate might be, are still more in connection with the Semiotic, albeit shallow, than the mere spectators. It is largely through cinema and T.V. that people are bound to their enslavement; more generally, through all art that effectuates and sustains the status-quo of *the Lords*. These "vicarious" realities eventually become much more attractive to their spectators than their own lives and they become distracted and blinded from reality: they "are content with the given." After a while, these spectators have become so comfortable, are so "appeased," within such alternative realities that they voluntarily give up on their own lives.¹⁶ For this reason Morrison has conjoined art, and cinema in particular, with death. Its spectators aren't living their lives, they are mere "quiet vampires," neither dead or alive, eying their idols, passively, vicariously living out their fantasies through them:

Film spectators are quiet vampires.

The appeal of cinema lies in the fear of death.

The spectator is a dying animal.

Invoke, palliate, drive away the Dead. Nightly.^{xcix}

The "fear of death," which is a fear of life, is moving, invoking people towards cinema, the movie theatre. Yet these spectators are "dying animal[s]" because slowly, they will exchange their own lives for the life on screen until there is nothing left. Film signifies death in its mass production of the spectator, brought to life by "artificial insemination" to give a false sense of life. Palliated, "the Dead" sit inside the cinema night after night to watch their life pass. Once again we encounter clear echoes from Artaud's essays leaping out of Morrison's poetry:

¹⁶ See p. 36-37 of this paper.

Movies in their turn, murdering us with second-hand reproductions which, filtered through machines, cannot unite with our sensibility, have maintained us for ten years in an ineffectual torpor, in which all our faculties appear to be foundering.^c

Particularly with the advent of erotic and nude cinema, the decline in participation with the impulse of life is further widening the gap between vision and desire. The forbidden and secret, indeed the sacred, become common as celluloid takes the secret matters of sex to a wider audience. This marks the evolution of voyeur to audience.^{ci} Sex, in being no longer a secret act of participation, becomes a visual set of objects and postures through which the audience *participates*, be it with an artificial life:

Films are collections of dead pictures which are given artificial insemination.^{cii}

The individual's experience is transformed by the "artificial insemination" of cinema. The experience of life becomes one of mind, where the Symbolic law is located, and is no longer built on participation, further distinguishing the Semiotic body as a part of the *other*. This then marks the facilitation of vision in the disconnection of the body, where sex is rightly seated, from the mind where, rather than participate and engage with the impulse of life, the individual now watches in safety.^{ciii} In the Tony Thomas interview, Morrison further clarified this disconnection:

Somehow life gets restricted to what can be seen, rather than what can be touched or experienced physically. [Yet] touch, physical involvement leads to all the real, basic, existential moments in life: sex, death, love. They have really nothing to do with scene, experiencing second-hand.^{civ}

Missing out on the key existential moments in their lives, Morrison argues, most people aren't alive at all, but are merely living a second-hand handout of what their lives could and should be. Morrison differentiates between the real and artificial world and then demonstrates their connection and conflict. As participation has been cast off, the passivity of observation has rooted and removed the participant from the world. The

cinema has replaced participation within the world and the artificial has replaced the natural. This may in time become a complete transformation, the individual so isolated and disconnected that this driving mechanism of vision will be the point through which sensation^{cv} will be recalled:

There may be a time
when we'll attend Weather Theatres to recall
the sensation of rain.^{cvi}

Exactly this mechanism of replacing real life with an artificial reality, projected on a mass scale, is the key element to *the Lords'* control over the city. Through the palliating, appeasing effect of cinema, citizens aren't even concerned about the control over their own lives anymore, and freely grant it to whoever is there waiting to pick it up. Morrison compares *the Lords* to the most notorious and vicious despots of history, as their system of mass media saturation could very well be seen as a weapon of mass destruction:

Cinema is most totalitarian of the arts. All
energy and sensation is sucked up into the skull,
a cerebral erection, skull bloated with blood.
Caligula wished a single neck for all his subjects
that he could behead a kingdom with one blow.
Cinema is this transforming agent.^{cvi}

With that one blow Caligula could behead the lot, the eyes of vision within the skull and the marriage between vision and mind, permanently separated from their relationship to the body, permanently separated from the possibility of reconnection. All aspects once related to the body, such as "energy and sensation," even the sexual act, is sucked up into the skull, as a "cerebral erection, bloated with blood." They are all part of the realm of the mind now. The Emperor, the father-god could ensure his permanent rule while the dangerous lure of the life impulse, threatening "the fragile order of power," would be perpetually disregarded. The cinema, Morrison argues, has done what Caligula could not do.^{cvi} To further the disconnective function ascribed to cinema, Morrison starts to give a specific meaning to the television set in his later poetry, which, he argues, is cinema installed right into people's living rooms. Growing increasingly popular in the 60's, the television set was an even worse phenomenon for Morrison, since people wouldn't even have to leave the house any longer to receive their second-hand life handouts.

On a concluding side note, within *The Lords* there is a significant catalogue of names, men who figure in the early development of film and cinema. Through Morrison's catalogue of names he highlights important points about the progression of vision, what it is and how it operates. It is a retelling of history from the perspective of the rise of technology and its predecessors. A small part of this history will be treated in the second part of this paper, yet its physical limitations alas prevent me from further elaborating on this particular aspect of Morrison's poetry.

Chapter 3: Reinventing the Myths

Through ventriloquism, gestures, play with objects
and all rare variations of the body in space,
the shaman signaled his "trip" to an audience
which shared the journey.

[page break]

In the seance, the shaman led. A sensuous panic,
deliberately evoked through drugs, chants, dancing,
hurls the shaman into trance. Changed voice,
convulsive movement. He acts like a madman. These
professional hysterics, chosen precisely for their
psychotic leaning, were once esteemed. They
mediated between man and spirit-world. Their mental
travels formed the crux of the religious life of
the tribe.

[page break]

Principle of seance: to cure illness. A mood
might overtake a people burdened by historical
events or dying in a bad landscape. They seek
deliverance from doom, death, dread. Seek possession,
the visit of gods and powers, a rewinning
of the life source from demon possessors. The
cure is culled from ecstasy. Cure illness or
prevent its visit, revive the sick, and regain
stolen, soul.^{cix}

Aside from extensively and meticulously describing the Symbolic world represented by and centred within the *city*, Morrison wrote many verses on how to liberate an individual from her/his enslavement and what that particular individual might find after being liberated. According to Morrison, it is possible to break away from *the Lords'* enslavement on reconnecting with what Nietzsche calls the mysterious primordial unity: "that unity with the innermost basis of the world, . . . the unity of man with nature."^{cx} There is, Morrison asserts, a necessity for taking responsibility once more and making a connection back to something that precedes the word, something that appears to have been lost.^{cx}i Participation with the primordial unity, or the impulse of life, can be regained through a new experienced mythology designed for the modern

world. Nietzsche stated that mythical communication touches the inner life of humanity because of its poetic genesis, using language at a pre-conceptual level. In this way, Nietzsche is able to maintain that mythical communication expresses the needs and feelings of a people: myths give them an identity that is the precondition for the production of art. The culture which Nietzsche envisages involves a qualitative upgrading of society: its productions are not a mere ornament to life, but rather a transformation of it, "a new and improved *physis*."¹⁷^{cxii} The reason for this apparent lack is that the power innate in humankind to produce myth is the same as that which produces art. The world of myth is a self-contained one, judged according to aesthetic, instead of logical, criteria.^{cxiii} Such a mythology can only be created within the Semiotic order of life, since it is there that man's subconsciousness resides, essential to the myth-making process. Yet, the Semiotic can only be revisited by a disruption of the Symbolic order. Once the dominant order has been successfully disrupted, the individual can reach in through the cracks to tap into and unleash the repressed desires and drives within the *chora*. The now unbound, untethered *chora* will immediately reconnect the individual with her/his natural drives, and consequently with the impulse of life. Within his poetry, Morrison presents a handful of methods the combination of which was to shape his project of *remythologization*. The first step is to learn certain ritualistic techniques and practices from ancient worship cultures in order to translate and transform them into the modern era. As mentioned earlier, Morrison turned to the ancient Native American worship practices and was inspired mostly by the purgation ritual of the *séance*, led by the shaman. In the last part of the *séance* poem, Morrison describes its functionality, in terms fairly similar to his depiction of life inside the *city*. He observes "people burdened by historical events or dying in a bad landscape," who "seek deliverance from doom, death, dread." All of these qualifiers strongly echo Morrison's descriptions of life inside the *city* under Symbolic dominance; consequently his project of *remythologization* is to "cure illness or prevent its visit, revive the sick, and regain stolen, soul," just like the ancient *séance* ritual from the Native Americans. Aside from the functional description of a *séance* in the last part of his poem, Morrison also provides clear instructions on how to achieve its cleansing powers in two short statements: "Seek possession, [seek] the visit of gods and powers, [and seek] a rewinning of the life source from demon possessors. The cure is culled from ecstasy."

¹⁷ Italics mine.

Once again, the voice of Nietzsche incontestably echoes throughout these lines, as the Dionysian worship culture was rooted in cultivating exactly these practices. A connotational shift has occurred, however, within the term "demon," which originally stems from the Latin/Greek word *daemon/daimon*, literally meaning "deity, divine power; guiding spirit, tutelary deity."^{cxiv} In the Greek tradition, Dionysus was accompanied by such demons, or satyrs, with Silenus as their chief, and in that aspect, they were widely associated with fertility, drunkenness, music and wisdom. In the modern English language, however, the figure of the demon has shifted towards something evil and harmful. The OED provides the following definitions: 1) An evil spirit or devil, especially one thought to possess a person or act as a tormentor in hell/ 2) A cruel, evil, or unmanageable person/ 3) A powerful, often destructive compulsion or obsession/ 4) mischief; devilry.^{cxv} However, Nietzsche, keeping the original Latin orthography *daemon* in his writings, regards and mentions them in the original Latin/Greek meaning. Notwithstanding he uses the modern English orthography, Morrison, too, considers a demon in his poetic universe as a quasi-divine entity possessing (and guarding) the life source. In the second stanza, Morrison explains how to evoke such possession, such a visit from the gods, once again inspired by the Native American *séance* practice. The *séance*, as mentioned earlier, served to "cure illness or prevent its visit, revive the sick, and regain stolen, soul" and was led by the shaman, the priest of the tribe. During the *séance*, s/he would act "like a madman," induced by "professional hysterics, chosen precisely for their psychotic leaning." These hysterics, or sensuous panics, were "deliberately evoked through drugs, chants, dancing" and they would hurl "the shaman into trance." As Morrison accurately points out, the shamans mediated between our world and the spirit world and their mental travels formed the crux of the religious life of the tribe. Such, or any, spiritual crux has largely disappeared in our modern, rationalized society.¹⁸

¹⁸ The following quote from 90's cult series *Twin Peaks* perfectly captures the loss of the connection with a primordial spiritual world: "Diane... 10:00 a.m. at the Great Northern. I've just been in a hotel room with the One-armed Man... or what's left of him. In another time, another culture, he may have been a seer, a shaman priest. In our world he's a shoe salesman, and lives among the shadows."

3.1 Artaud's legacy

Morrison's employment of mythic amplification would lead him to transform these ancient rituals to a modern practice in order to shape his new mythology. He did not need to look very far to find a mentor guiding him along the way, for the writings of Antonin Artaud had already crossed his path. The influence of Artaud on Morrison was witnessed as early as his student years at UCLA, where Morrison took up the Comparative Literature program within the UCLA English Department and attended Jack Hirschman's class on Antonin Artaud. Morrison was greatly influenced by Artaud's brand of surrealist theatre and much of Morrison's later growth in dark poetic sensibility of cinematic nature is because of him.^{cxvi} A fellow student, who was involved in a student theatre production along with Morrison, later stated that

Jim quickly turned the rehearsals into anarchic, absurdist experiments in obscene improv, prompted in part by his reading of theater-of-cruelty mage Antonin Artaud. . . . He played scenes and read lines differently every night, sometimes improvising bits of stage business, refusing to repeat himself. The director, who had given Artaud's essays to Jim, was kept in a state of suspense. "There was a constant feeling of apprehension," Carlson recalled "and a feeling that things were on the brink of loss of control. . . . With Jim, we just never knew."^{cxvii}

Artaud's ideas on theatre, language and their ritual power, most strikingly represented in his famous collection *The Theatre and its Double* —a collection of essays, manifestos, lectures, letters and other things written between 1931 and 1938—, would eventually push Morrison deep into his own poetic endeavours. Consequently, many of Artaud's revolutionary theatrical and linguistic techniques resurface in Morrison's poetry and stage performances, ever more stubbornly as the years progressed. A development which shouldn't be surprising, since Morrison and Artaud had coined very similar ambitions in their lives: to describe and establish a radically new way of living, through radically new experiences of art, language, social interactions and life itself. They both attempted to create a new mythology that would serve the modern world in their quest for rebalancing the modern culture, away from the tyranny of the dominant, Symbolic way of life. Artaud points out that

Never before, when it is life itself that is in question, has there been so much talk of civilization and culture. And there is a curious parallel between this generalized collapse of life at the root of our present demoralization and our concern for a culture which has never been coincident with life, which in fact has been devised to tyrannize over life.^{cxviii}

Where Artaud still used tyranny as a metaphor to describe his view on his contemporary culture, Morrison already installed it into his fictional universe where *the Lords* serve to represent exactly this cultural hegemony, which, according to both, stifled and squeezed the life out of its subjects. The "collapse of life" Artaud mentions, stands "at the root of our present demoralization," causing awesome waves of perversion and violence: Artaud urges to "consider the unprecedented number of crimes whose perverse gratuitousness is explained only by our powerlessness to take complete possession of life."^{cxix} As mentioned before, participation with the primordial unity, or the impulse of life, can be regained by a disruption of the Symbolic order; and once the dominant order has been successfully disrupted, the individual can reach in through the cracks to tap into and unleash the repressed desires and drives within the *chora* in order to recreate the much desired new myths. But how does one successfully disrupt the Symbolic order? Both Artaud and Morrison propose a disruption through subjection to radically new experiences, both psychological and physical. The first step is to extend and amplify our linguistic system, which is now grammatically bound to social structures imposed by the Symbolic order and restricted to factual, non-metaphorical meaning. The negation of myth is correlated to the misuse of language, which is in a precarious condition when it has been reduced to the mere transmission of concepts. The revival of myth necessitates that language is restored to its original purpose, namely the communication of feelings rumbling and roaming at the very core of existence, without which humanity cannot possibly understand and guide itself. Since this purpose is no longer being fulfilled, Nietzsche claims that genuine communication is not really taking place.^{cxx} Concerning language, Artaud suggested long ago to once again release its full potential and utilize its every single dimension:

I am adding another language to the spoken language, and I am trying to restore to the language of speech its old magic, its essential spellbinding power, for its mysterious possibilities have been forgotten.^{cxxi}

In doing so, he created a new language based on the full potential of "its old magic, its essential spellbinding power." This was a language that would avail itself of the entire spectrum of humans' communicational apparatus, and therefore, a language that would have the strength and richness to create new myths for the modern era. Artaud adequately described his new language thusly:

Finding an impasse in speech, [this new language] returns spontaneously to gesture. . . . It brings again into the light all the relations fixed and enclosed in the strata of the human syllable, which has killed them by confining them. All the operations through which the word has passed in order to come to stand. . . . —by means of cries, onomatopoeia, signs, attitudes, and by slow, copious, impassioned modulations of tension, level by level, term by term—these it recreates.^{cxxii}

The method for creating this new language, or more accurately, this new, amplified means of communication, had been developed by Artaud while visiting the Tarahumara Indians during his stay in Mexico in 1936. Artaud was invited by the Tarahumara to witness a peyote rite, which he meticulously accounted in his book *The Peyote Dance*. He describes how, after the Indians have prepared the peyote drink and he receives it, the rite is initiated. The dance is performed over and around him and he sees the priests with their wooden staffs and the peyote dancer wearing hundreds of miniature bells. At this point begins Artaud's obsession with the staff used by the Tarahumara sorcerers in the ceremony, wondering what it is the Peyote Master tells them during the three-year initiation in the forest when they learn the secrets of the staff, after which he collapses from fatigue. Artaud experiences a vision of Hieronymus Bosch's *Nativity* and, upon returning to his senses, he sees the sorcerers descending the mountain leaning on their huge staffs. His description of the ambience where the peyote dance takes place is clear and precise in every fantastic detail. He sees fires "rising from all directions toward the sky," the women grinding the peyote with "scrupulous brutality," the circle of earth trampled down by the priests where a bush lit on fire is blown upward in whirlwinds, the heart and lungs of two goats killed earlier in the day "trembling in the wind,"

hanging from a tree trunk in the form of a cross. Eventually, in a state of dissociation, he becomes a “man of stone who requires two men to get him mounted on his horse”^{cxxiii} when the ritual ends at dawn. Artaud reached the goal of his journey to Mexico and Tarahumara country —to travel in space as well as time to the rites of pre-Columbian shamanism.^{cxxiv}

3.2 Amplified language

Now, one might wonder how all of these Indian rites relate to radically new ways of communication through language amplification. Within the Indian séance ritual, the shaman provokes hysteria and psychotic attacks through psychoactive plants and meditation, specifically because these attacks disrupt the meaning-giving structure of the Symbolic Law and bring the subject back to its original linguistic state, a realm of meaning that resists any systemization. Through his ingestion of hallucinatory substances, Artaud claims to have been able to consciously open up and enter his subconscious, and eventually release the content of what had been stored and built up within the chora ever since the first contact with the Symbolic. In other words, what he stumbled into there, was a child’s language, a language of babble, incoherence; rhythm and sounds which are not exactly meaningless, but which are not susceptible to rational, systemic analysis, a child's babble cannot be paraphrased. Significantly, the use of psychoactive or hallucinatory drugs was only a means of Artaud to (re)discover his subconsciously locked away potential for disruptive language. It is not, however, the method Morrison presents and describes within his poetics, as has been numerous (and falsely) suggested by critics and moralists, often in order to unjustly discard his poetry as junkie/drug literature.^{cxxv} Morrison proposes to utilize Artaud's discovered amplified language to disrupt the Symbolic instead of promoting and glorifying the activity of going into a drug frenzy. Even though the pre-linguistic language which Artaud describes will eventually be more or less successfully repressed by the Symbolic functions, the process can also be reversed by pushing chaotic, unsystematized pre-linguistic communication to overhaul the Symbolic structures. Kristeva argues that Semiotic practice (in language and otherwise) “pluralizes,” “pulverizes,” and “musicates”

all ossified, Symbolic forms.^{cxxvi} Language has to be dismantled from the inside to ultimately throw off the grammatical and structural straitjacket of the Symbolic.

Exactly this is what Morrison envisioned with his later poetry, which, following Artaud's new language, had acquired its own recharged symbols, pushing it further into the realm of the abstract. Accordingly, Kristeva identifies these pre-linguistic features which can fracture Symbolic structures not only in children's developing language skills, but also in poetic language, and in the language of any art based on subconscious images; all of which are languages where the relationships between words and concepts are significantly distorted. She identifies them as languages of materiality, meaning that they draw attention to themselves rather than inscribing an easy, transparent relationship between words and the world.^{cxxvii} Kristeva further argues that poetic language is directly related with the Semiotic order and is the best way therefore to release the repressed primal drives for adults once they fall under the Symbolic Law. To understand the significance of the relationship between poetic language and the Semiotic, we need to turn to Nietzsche's Apollo/Dionysus duality once again, yet not as a representation of psychological states but how he initially intended it: as creative forces guiding the artist in the art-making process. In his aesthetics, Nietzsche distinctly differentiates between two forces, or drives, symbolized by "those two gods of art, Apollo and Dionysus":

These two very different drives go hand in hand, for the most part in open conflict with each other and simultaneously provoking each other all the time to new and more powerful offspring, in order to perpetuate in them the contest of that opposition, which the common word "Art" only seems to bridge.^{cxxviii}

It are these drives which enable the artist to create her/his art, which on its turn establishes and/or reinforces the cultural drive from whence it originated. Nietzsche consequently makes a distinction between Apollonian art and Dionysian art, initially as one being visual art (such as painting and sculpting) and the other non-visual art (such as poetry and music), but later added that *any* art form could spring from either creative force. Apollonian art, qualified by Nietzsche as "the beautiful appearance of the world of dreams,"^{cxxix} further reinforces the Symbolic structure and culture of the *city* in

Morrison's poetic universe. The replacement of real life with a substitute reality is already present in Nietzsche's description and he later notes that "for all the most intense life of this dream reality, we nevertheless have the thoroughly unpleasant sense of their *illusory quality*."^{cxxx} On the other side of the wall, Nietzsche identifies Dionysian art as "the tremendous *awe* which seizes a man when he suddenly doubts his ways of comprehending illusion," coupled with "the ecstatic rapture which rises up. . . . from the innermost depths of a human being."^{cxxxi} By the same token, Dionysian art will establish and further reinforce a Semiotic realm within the minds of its subjects; a realm which can be described as the realm of the "being" before language identifies it as such. It is the source of instinctual drives, an existence beyond words, beyond literal meaning and it communicates and disrupts the Symbolic through music, poetry or any work of art based on these instinctual drives and images.^{cxxxii} It is therefore no surprise that Morrison used poetry in order to break through the Symbolic Law, since poetic language marks the return of the repressed elements of the Semiotic within the realm of the Symbolic, notably by way of rhythm, mimesis, intertextuality and linguistic play; it stretches our conceptual frameworks and liberates our thinking.^{cxxxiii} Poetry is uniquely capable of utilizing words to represent primal drives and forces as they gaze back into that ancient sensibility where words came forth with primal power, recognizing what they had become in our Western intellectual culture.^{cxxxiv} In short, Kristeva unhinges the binary oppositions through Semiotic language as a form of art, leading to an infinitization of meaning (through the Semiotic). The "dialectic" of Kristeva would place the thesis of reason and logic against that which has been suppressed, hidden away in the chora. In opposition to the fixity of Symbolic meaning, she introduces the heterogeneous rupture of poetic language into a Symbolic society, further restating the arguments against totalization and "identity thinking." The artistic creation would become poetic language, which is a signifying practice, and a transgression which defines the practice of the (Semiotic) artist. Indeed poetic language becomes a "key moment in practice" through which transgression is put in process.^{cxxxv}

3.3 Cinema & Life

From this point, it is possible to begin the creation process of modern myths using Semiotic, or Dionysian, art. Once the poetic language has been established, myths serving the modern world are being created simultaneously, through and within that

new poetic language with newly recharged mythical symbols. Morrison, faithfully following Nietzsche's aesthetics, describes a dual identity to art: one Apollonian identity, part of the Symbolic, the social, the structured and the masculine; and one Dionysian identity, part of the Semiotic, the instinctive, the chaotic and the feminine. Any art form can be a manifestation of either side, depending on the creative force, or drive, guiding the artist during the creative process. This process, and the force behind it, is primarily subconscious; the artist is wontedly not aware that (and which) forces are guiding him towards creation. In his representation of modern society Morrison paid close attention to the role of cinema as manifested within Symbolic society, the *city*. But he pays an equal amount of attention to the role of cinema on the other side, the realm of the Semiotic. He first identifies the dual nature of cinema:

The camera is androgynous machine, a kind of mechanical hermaphrodite.^{cxxxvi}

As androgynous being, a mechanical hermaphrodite, cinema appears to have a potential to access either side of the circle: both male and female, Symbolic and Semiotic, Apollo and Dionysus. After his diagnosis of the modern day cultural hegemony represented in the volume of *The Lords*, Morrison investigates the origin and history of cinema in an attempt to track down its Semiotic counterpart (of the exclusively Symbolic cinema inside the *city*). In an interview with *Rolling Stone Magazine*, Morrison explained the importance of film to him: he believes it is the closest approximation in art that we have to the actual flow of consciousness, in both dream life (the Apollonian) and in the everyday perception of the world (the Dionysian).^{cxxxvii} And it is the Semiotic variant of cinema that would, according to Morrison, achieve similar cleansing results as the Indian séance had on its participants, to which it is compared:

Cinema derives not from painting, literature, sculpture, theater, but from ancient popular wizardry. It is the contemporary manifestation of an evolving history of shadows, a delight in pictures that move, a belief in magic. Its lineage is entwined from the earliest beginning with Priest and sorcery, a summoning of phantoms. With, at first, only slight aid of the mirror and fire, men called up dark and secret visits from regions in the buried mind. In these séances, shades are spirits which ward off evil.^{cxxxviii}

Cinema in its Semiotic advent carries with it an ancient "belief in magic," it stems from genuine awe for the divine and the supernatural, stored deep inside the subconscious. These were the "dark and secret visits from regions in the buried mind." In other words, it fulfilled a religious purpose based on a primitive mythology and was created to "ward off evil." These functions are exactly what will open up the Semiotic dimension within modern cinema, Morrison argues. Yet before describing the modern functions of cinema, Morrison continued retracing the history of cinema and stumbled on what is not commonly associated with cinema: Alchemy. A philosophy and science which is well documented as a part of Morrison's wide spectrum of reading interest, including alchemical and mystical texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.^{cxix} Morrison clearly demonstrated both in his writing and in interview a deep interest and understanding of the alchemical process.^{cxl}

Cinema, heir of alchemy, last of an erotic science.^{cxli}

It was Antonin Artaud, however, who first made the connection between alchemy and theatre:

There is a mysterious identity of essence between the principle of the theater and that of alchemy. . . . But there is a still deeper resemblance between the theater and alchemy, one which leads much further metaphysically. It is that alchemy and the theater are so to speak virtual arts, and do not carry their end—or their reality—within themselves. Where alchemy, through its symbols, is the spiritual Double of an operation which functions only on the level of real matter, the theater must also be considered as the Double, not of this direct, everyday reality of which it is gradually being reduced to a mere inert replica—as empty as it is sugarcoated—but of another archetypal and dangerous reality, a reality of which the Principles, like dolphins, once they have shown their heads, hurry to dive back into the obscurity of the deep.^{cxlii}

Alchemy, Artaud argues, is developed from a series of fundamentals which are always the same; and which, he continues, could also be said about theatre, or art in general. On a deeper metaphysical level, both alchemy and theatre (art) are recreations or reproductions of reality, much like alchemy is "the spiritual Double of an operation

which functions only on the level of real matter." However, unlike Symbolic art inside the *city*, which is replicating "this direct, everyday reality" and is therefore empty and sugar-coated, Artaud is interested in the replication of another reality: a reality which he qualifies as "archetypal and dangerous." It was, of course, not until a decade later that this idea was picked up and further developed by Morrison, who connects it to cinema rather than to theatre. Morrison, however, does not only see a connection between alchemy and art, but even proclaims cinema as its heir, meaning that it adopted and implemented its key features, which will be briefly discussed. For Morrison, as for Artaud, alchemy is strongly related to the realm of the Semiotic, since he regularly identifies it as "an erotic science,"^{cxliii} connected to nature and "involved in buried aspects of reality":

In his retort the alchemist repeats the work of
Nature.^{cxliv}

Gaining extra weight through the enjambment in this short poem, "Nature" is in Morrison's poetic universe always part of the Semiotic realm. The alchemist reawakens the lost Semiotic realm, to which Morrison refers as "the work of Nature," in her/his activities. Nature, or the Semiotic realm, is recreated in the alchemic experiments through the process of separation and reunion.¹⁹ Significantly, for the alchemist, nature is a place of constant copulation and fornication, of attraction and repulsion, of an erotic symbiosis between contrasting elements:

The alchemists detect in the sexual activity of
man a correspondence with the world's creation,
with the growth of plants, and with mineral
formations. When they see the union of rain
and earth, they see it in an erotic sense, as
copulation. And this extends to all natural
realms of matter. For they can picture love
affairs of chemicals and stars, a romance of
stones, or the fertility of fire.^{cxlv}

Correspondence is the key word in these lines, for it solidifies the relationship between man and the Semiotic realm. Due to the centuries of Symbolic reign, most have forgotten the connection that man has with its natural environment on birth, yet the alchemists still "detect" a correspondence, even in the *city*: the sexual activity of man. On the

¹⁹ See p. 76 of this paper

following page of his volume, Morrison picks up on that key word again, but its scope not only includes man and nature but now disseminated quaquaversally. Significantly, it is in the explosion of meaning and connections, the idea of endless and dense variation, that Morrison discovers the seed, the creation and the advent of cinema growing out of alchemy. Accordingly, montage, the very technique which distinguishes cinema from, for example, theatre —most often appointed as cinema's predecessor— is here linked to the alchemists' correspondences:

Strange, fertile correspondence the alchemists
sensed in unlikely orders of being. Between
men and planets, plants and gestures, words and
weather. These disturbing connections: an in-
fant's cry and the stroke of silk; the whorl
of an ear and an appearance of dogs in the yard;
a woman's head lowered in sleep and the morning
dance of cannibals; these are conjunctions which
transcend the sterile signal of any "willed"
montage. These juxtapositions of objects, sounds,
actions, colors, weapons, wounds, and odors shine
in an unheard-of way, impossible ways.

Film is nothing when not an illumination of
this chain of being which makes a needle poised
in flesh call up explosions in a foreign capital.^{cxlvi}

Since Morrison was originally trained in film studies, he intuitively approached and implemented the montage/collage technique, which for Morrison meant the juxtaposition of pure image, into his poetry from the very start. Such juxtapositions of objects, sounds, actions, colours etc are what typify Morrison's (especially later) poetry, as will be widely discussed in the second part of this paper. These juxtapositions make it possible for cinema to adopt Artaud's new amplified language and assimilate subconscious images and symbols into its vocabulary, and ultimately form connections which "disturb" the Symbolic structures. The combination of seemingly random images is 'fertile but strange,' because it creates new, metaphorical dimensions of meaning in their collision, which, on their turn, connect new images to the original, ultimately developing a "chain of being" that will "shine in. . . impossible ways." Cinema then employs Artaud's idea of amplified (poetic) language built of images from the subconscious. Such language will allow cinema to speak directly to the oldest parts of its spectators' psychology and enable them to release built-up repressed instincts and

drives. The last line of the poem is an excellent example of the radical metaphors Morrison used to call up "explosions" in the minds of his readers, disrupting the Symbolic and releasing the content of the chora. When the "chain of being" is *illuminated* by film, it becomes a "needle poised in flesh": a syringe ready to inject its Semiotic antidote into the spectator. Film, within the poem, but also the poem itself, serves as a medicine against the Symbolic suppression of the self, leading up to violent riots to overthrow the dominance of *the Lords*, a revolution triggering "explosions in foreign capital[s]." While the term capital, the city of cities, is firstly connected to an attack on home of *the Lords*, there is an alternative and older meaning of the word, namely 'head.' The Merriam-Webster etymologic details on 'capital' are as follows: "Origin and Etymology of capital: Middle English *capitale*, from Anglo-French *capital*, *capitel*, from Late Latin *capitellum* small head, top of column, diminutive of Latin *capit-*, *caput* head — First Known Use: 13th century."^{cxlvii} It is this meaning, in the sense of 'head,' in which "foreign" regions, such as the subconscious chora, experience those revolutionary "explosions," that allows us to finally close up the extended metaphor, the "chain of being," present in the last line of this poem. When film uses such extended metaphorical images, it injects a cure against the diseases of the *city* by (violently) releasing the content stored away deep inside the subconscious. This, Morrison avers, is how film should be, if it wants to be something at all. In exposing the relationship between cinema (art) and alchemy, and neatly describing the latter's characteristics and properties, Morrison indirectly delineated the immense potential for disruption and redemption present in any art form, yet according to Morrison, it was a potential commodiously uncultivated. When meeting Artaud's (and Morrison's) expectations for amplified, metaphorical language, when it causes "an illumination of this chain of being," the mythic and religious dimension of cinema in its oldest forms will return to presence in modern cinema and accomplish similar purposes:

Cinema returns us to anima, religion of matter,
which gives each thing its special divinity and
sees gods in all things and beings.^{cxlviii}

These lines compare well with a quote from famous Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung; "[w]ith the archetype of the anima we enter the realm of the gods, or rather, the realm that metaphysics has reserved for itself."^{cxlix} Jung furthermore locates the anima "beyond all categories," thereby positing it in the transcendent, and claims that it

"therefore can dispense with blame as well as with praise."^{cl} Just as Morrison compares the work of the film-maker with that of the alchemist, so too does Jung additionally note that "the anima complex is one of the oldest features of Latin alchemy."^{cli} As argued before, Artaud's amplified language is applied to recharge ancient (often subconscious) symbols and images and ultimately to create a modern mythology. These are the symbols and images "which give each thing its special divinity and sees gods in all things and beings," and here we ultimately find the long awaited and greatly desired transgression from the Symbolic into the Semiotic. Morrison's instructions to "seek possession, [seek] the visit of gods and powers, [and seek] a rewinning of the life source from demon possessors," are now successfully conducted and the individual will truly find that "the cure is culled from ecstasy." With those newly recharged symbols and myths within the Semiotic language, it eventually becomes possible to disrupt the entire social structure of the Symbolic order, as Artaud argues:

These symbols. . . . burst forth in the guise of incredible images which give freedom . . . to acts that are by nature hostile to the life of societies. In the true theater a play disturbs the senses' repose, frees the repressed unconscious, incites a kind of virtual revolt. . . . This leads to the rejection of the usual limitations of man and man's powers, and infinitely extends the frontiers of what is called reality. We must believe in a sense of life renewed by the theater, a sense of life in which man fearlessly makes himself master.^{clii}

It is this strength and power in the language of myth that shows the mere individual as the archetypal, and ordinary things as hierophanies. One tree becomes the Tree of the World, one pool or lake becomes the Primordial Waters: a transcendent space is discovered within the fallen world of experience, just as eternity is discovered within time.^{cliii} The individual is now liberated from enslavement and reconnected with "that unity with the innermost basis of the world, . . . the unity of man with nature": Nietzsche's mysterious primordial unity. Once the language of myth has been sufficiently re-established into society, a modern mythology starts taking shape, combining and morphing all the newly created modern myths into one vast body of Semiotic art, in order to "achieve total response in the face of traditional arts which focus on narrower inlets of sensation."^{cliv} In poems from *The Lords*, it is evident that Morrison's poetry is

typical of a literary kind that combines a dark pessimism with a radiant, transcendental idealism and is therefore transmitted in a medium able to range widely in tone and manner, prose poetry. Upon this canvas, Morrison has given a dazzling demonstration of a visionary language which he reconstructed part by part in the tradition of William Blake, Arthur Rimbaud and Friedrich Nietzsche.^{clv} The structure of Morrison's universe is a movement from captivity to redemption, bathing in an atmosphere of a cycle of great loss and a new compensatory resolution.^{clvi} And within his universe, Morrison ascribed such a task to the cinema of his day:

Each film depends upon all the others and drives you on to others: Cinema was a novelty, a scientific toy, until a sufficient body of works had been amassed, enough to create an intermittent other world, a powerful, infinite mythology to be dipped into at will.

Films have an illusion of timelessness fostered by their regular, indomitable appearance.^{clvii}

The "other world" Morrison refers to, bathing in "a powerful, infinite mythology," would in the context of the volume of *The Lords* mean a world outside of the *city*, a world which he elaborately describes in his second volume of poetry: *The New Creatures*, which brings us to the next stage of Morrison's philosophical framework. Once a body of works large enough to create an intermittent other world had been amassed, certain people started to break away from the *city* and disappear into the wilderness. The volume of *The Lords* befittingly concludes with the following lines, paving the path towards Morrison's second volume, titled *The New Creatures*:

Door of passage to the other side,
the soul frees itself in stride.^{clviii}

Chapter 4: The New Creatures in the Wilderness

I

Snakeskin jacket
Indian eyes
Brilliant hair

He moves in disturbed
Nile Insect
Air^{clix}

VII

Lizard woman
w/ your insect eyes
w/ your wild surprise.
Warm daughter of silence.
Venom.
Turn your back w/ a slither of moaning wisdom.
The unblinking blind eyes
 behind walls new histories rise
and wake growling & whining
 the weird dawn of dreams.
Dogs lie sleeping.
The wolf howls.
A creature lives out the war.
A forest.
A rustle of cut words, choking
river.^{clx}

The forests, deserts and highways, *the wilderness* of Morrison's poetic universe, are where *the New Creatures* roam, amongst the dogs, wolves, snakes and insects, in accordance with the impulse of life, the primordial unity, the Semiotic realm. As mentioned several times before, Morrison often used symbols and images in highly paradoxical, even plain contradictory contexts; yet these symbols and images are usually part of an inherent duality as well. Although they stand on the other side of the threshold, *The New Creatures*, like the people in *the city*, receive instectoid features in several poems in the second volume. However, unlike the people in *the city*, most often associated with eusocial instectoid features, the characters in the two poems

represented above, even more so than the killer or assassin,²⁰ seem to have a natural connection with their environment specifically through the insectoid metaphors, as they move in "disturbed Nile Insect air" and have "Indian" or "insect eyes," replacing the dominant Symbolic sense of vision with a natural, Semiotic one. Equally significant are the other animalistic features they receive, most often from the reptile family, such as the "Snakeskin jacket," also possibly connected to traditional Native American garments. The female in poem VII is not only attributed with certain animalistic features, but is fully identified as "Lizard women," and she is a daughter of "venom" who "slither[s]." These images highly coincide with the imagery described by Jung, which he called the archetypes. For males, the most common archetypal image in visionary phenomena is the Anima, the latent female side of the male personality and usually perceived by men as highly attractive and erotic, yet combined with an immanent sense of danger. The "Lizard woman" in Morrison's poem could be reasonably interpreted as a literary manifestation of this particular anthropomorphic archetype of the unconscious mind. Jung stated that "something strangely meaningful clings to her, a secret knowledge or hidden wisdom,"^{clxi} which distinctly echoes in the line "Turn your back w/ a slither of moaning wisdom." The Anima typically functions as a guide to the unconscious and, according to Jung, she appears in a variety of animal forms; most often as cat, snake or lizard, all of which make an appearance in Morrison's poetry. Furthermore, Jung claimed that two other important archetypal images of the unconscious are the child and the circular movement or object. These represent the creative state through which an artist enters the awareness of the unconscious. Both are images of an ideal unity of conscious and unconscious elements of the personality, or the ideal altered state. Morrison sees the unconscious and the altered states as a means to transcend the boundaries of reality.^{clxii} The entire movement of Morrison's philosophy is consequently circular, similar to the archetypal pattern present in most of history's mythologies:

The usual pattern is, first, of a break away or departure from the local social order and context; next, a long deep, retreat inward and backward, backward, as it were, in time, and inwards, deep into the psyche; a chaotic series of encounters there, darkly terrifying experiences, and presently (if the victim is fortunate)

²⁰ See p. 35 of this paper

encounters of a centering kind, fulfilling, harmonizing, giving new courage; and then finally, in such fortunate cases, a return journey of rebirth to life.^{clxiii}

The New Creatures are the ones who were able to break free from the oppressive dominance of *the Lords*, the ones who have "turned [their] back[s]" to *the Lords* and they left *the city* for the ferocious surrounding wilderness to form tribes and communities of their own. What they left behind were "unblinking blind eyes / behind walls." The people behind the city walls are still chained to their deceitful Symbolic vision, which 'blinds' them for the real world outside. Morrison's literary construction of *the New Creatures*, the ones who tore themselves loose from the oppression of *the Lords*, is presumably entrenched in Nietzsche's concept of the *creators*; a concept firstly coined in what is probably his most famous work, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*:

To lure many from the herd - for that I have come. The people and the herd shall be angry with me: Zarathustra wants to be called a robber by the herdsmen. I say herdsmen, but they call themselves the good and just. I say herdsmen, but they call themselves the believers in the true faith. Behold the good and just! Whom do they hate most? The one who breaks their tables of values, the breaker, the lawbreaker; he, however, is the creator. . . . Companions, the creator seeks, not corpses, not herds and believers. Fellow creators the creator seeks - those who write new values on new tables. Companions, the creator seeks, and fellow harvesters. . . . Fellow-creators, Zarathustra seeks; fellow harvesters and fellow rejoicers, Zarathustra seeks: what has he to do with herds and shepherds and corpses! I will join the creators, the harvesters, and the rejoicers: I will show them the rainbow and all the steps to the overman.^{clxiv}

Not only is the orthographical similarity between Nietzsche's *creators* and Morrison's *New Creatures* of such a degree it exceeds reasonable doubt, but the content of both concepts, too, asseverate a highly corresponding nature. Both the *creators* and *the New Creatures* "lure many from the herd" to live a life of integrity and freedom; yet, where Nietzsche's *creators* appear more as prophet-like figures who attempt to persuade the herd into following their path to freedom, Morrison's *New Creatures* only offer images, sounds and stories (the new mythology transferred through art) with which the people inside *the city* will have to break themselves free.

4.1 The Violence of the American Night

Within the volume of *The Lords*, Morrison differentiates and categorizes his literary characters between subject and object. A subject, according to Morrison, is one of those characters living in *the city*, the ones who are *subjected* to a higher authority and have no control over their own lives, the ones who are forever limited to their subjectivity, unless the subject escapes from *the city* by disrupting the Symbolic structures within her/his own perceptions and thereby releasing the repressed subconscious reality:

The subject says: "I see first lots of things
which dance . . . then everything becomes gradually
connected."^{clxv}

The dancing, similar to the Indian séance ceremony, marks the start of a new mythology. The subject is now introduced into the cults of the violent and sexual instincts, as a rite of passage. Here it will fully unleash and indulge in all of her/his suppressed fantasies. Because contact with the unconscious during an altered state feels like timelessness, the subject interprets that feeling similar to death. Once chaos is introduced, "everything becomes gradually connected" and the subject will now be able to shed off her/his fake or subjective identity to become an object, part of a larger tribe, mythology and culture which moves and functions as one (Dionysian) body. Nietzsche too stated that when "that Dionysian excitement arises. . . . the subjective fades into complete forgetfulness of self"^{clxvi} to give way for the object which is pure and authentic:

Objects as they exist in time the clean eye and
camera give us. Not falsified by "seeing."^{clxvii}

Only unmediated, "clean," Semiotic vision can ensure the object's independence and authenticity, not falsified by any "seeing" mediator narrowing the receiver's perceptions. Once the subjective identity is fully cast off, the transition from *the city* to *the wilderness* is complete. Yet, the act of breaking free from *the city* is not an exodus away from evil into paradise, but into a wild and dangerous place composing a constant struggle for survival. Now, in "the weird dawn of dreams," "new histories rise & wake growling and

whining."²¹ These new histories form a beast-like threat for the people who create and live them. Where the first volume of poetry Morrison published, *The Lords*, was characterized by an overwhelming sense of disease and decay, his second volume, *The New Creatures*, is bathing in a world of violence and constant threat. To many readers' surprise, who had expected a happily ever after following the escape from *the city*, life in *the wilderness* is cruel, ruthless and harsh; *the New Creatures* face a constant struggle to secure their freedom and survival. Artaud had already coined the idea that all freedom is dark and dangerous and that it comes at a great price:

We can now say that all true freedom is dark, and infallibly identified with sexual freedom which is. . . . the freedom of life. . . . identified with all that is dirty, abject, infamous in the process of living and of throwing oneself headlong with a natural and impure vigor, with a perpetually renewed strength, upon life. And that is why all the great Myths are dark, so that one cannot imagine, save in an atmosphere of carnage, torture, and bloodshed, all the magnificent Fables which recount to the multitudes the first sexual division and the first carnage of essences that appeared in creation. . . . It releases conflicts, disengages powers, liberates possibilities, and if these possibilities and these powers are dark, it is the fault not of the plague nor of the theater, but of life.^{clxviii}

Morrison eagerly adopted this idea and used it to construct the universe of *the New Creatures*: *the wilderness*. As mentioned in the first chapter, Kristeva, too, attributes an important role both to sex and violence in the struggle for freedom in claiming that sex and violence form the primal intersection for humanity's communal identity.^{clxix} In the Lizzie James interview, Morrison further explains this need for the sexual and the violent in his poetry:

I rely on images of violence, which bring the shock of pain, to penetrate the barriers people erect and defend, not simple defenses; the phony facades people live behind. Blocking their perceptions from coming in, and blocking their

²¹ Poem VII is an excellent example of the cut-up technique Morrison often employs in his poetry, , from within one image, over the level of its syntax up to the volume as a whole. The lines "Turn your back w/ a slither of moaning wisdom. / The unblinking blind eyes / behind walls new histories rise / and wake growling & whining / the weird dawn of dreams." are in my analysis best paraphrased in the following syntax: Turn your back with a slither of moaning wisdom to the unblinking blind eyes behind walls. In the weird dawn of dreams new histories rise and wake growling and whining.

feelings from coming out. There are two ways I try to shatter those facades, or at least make a hole where something can get in, to let the trapped feelings out – one way is violence, pain. The other is eroticism.^{clxx}

It appears the only way out of *the city* is to embrace the real, to release the madness, the violence, the hidden fantasies, to let go of everything. Only then, the search for the lost reality can begin. As mentioned earlier, *the New Creatures* broke out of *the city* and now roam around the *wilderness*: the other side of the threshold. Where the Symbolic world of *the city* is connected to the day, heat and light, the Semiotic world of *the wilderness* is characterized as cool and dark, as what Morrison calls *the American Night*:

The world is built
up again, struggling in
darkness. . . .

Fear the good deep dark
American Night.
Blessed is Night.

Wild folks in weird dress
by the side of the hiway. . . .

Love the deep green gloom
of American Night.

Love frightened corners,
Thrill to the wood-vine.

So much of it good
& so much quantity.^{clxxi}

This is the Dionysian stage, which releases and depicts the world as it is outside *the city*: violent and unpredictable, a world of chaos and disorder. The Semiotic world is built up again, in the darkness of the blessed deep *American Night*, where fear, the "deep green gloom," is something to love and cherish, as it assures their freedom. *The American Night* could be as night falling on the *wilderness*: it envelopes the wild, thematic landscape, matching its vastness. The interplay between these two symbols is an excellent example of the concept of quantitatively endless and dense variation thematized in night's symbolic sensuality.^{clxxii} Here, real life, existence in its most essential meaning takes

place, resulting in various scenes of horrid murder, orgies, rape, fear and pain. The sexual imagery in *The New Creatures* is mostly present in the following poem:

A file of young people
going thru a small woods

The walls are garish red
The stairs
High discordant screaming
She has the tokens.
"You too"
"Don't go"
He flees.
Music renews.

The mating-pit.
"Salvation"
Tempted to leap in circle.

Deep in the *wilderness* outside of the *city*, in a bordello-like establishment, the young girls have finally reclaimed their sexual identity and the freedom to openly indulge in every single aspect of their desires, which ultimately constitutes their "salvation." Analogous to the legends surrounding the Grecian Dionysian festivals and the Roman Bacchanalia in honour of the god Dionysus, the establishment is dominated by sounds of music and the "high discordant screaming" of its visitors caught in an ecstatic frenzy, "tempted to leap in circle," the "mating-pit." These actions, however, are merely implied within *The New Creatures*. It was not until his later poetry (posthumously published) that Morrison started using sexual imagery in a much more explicit manner. The images of violence in *The New Creatures*, on the other hand, are significantly more overt and numerous. Morrison describes multiple scenes of horrendous genocide and tortures. Often rivalling tribes would start wars over the scarce life sources and to gather human sacrifices for their gods:

VI

Wounds, stags, & arrows
Hooded flashing legs plunge
 near the tranquil women.
Startling obedience from the pool people.
Astonishing caves to plunder.
Loose, nerveless ballets of looting.

Boys are running.
Girls are screaming, falling.
The air is thick w/ smoke.
Dead crackling wires dance pools
of sea blood.^{clxxiii}

Antonin Artaud once wrote in an essay: "All true culture relies upon the barbaric and primitive means of totemism whose savage, i.e., entirely spontaneous, life I wish to worship,"^{clxxiv} a statement which loudly echoes throughout Morrison's second volume of poetry, which, despite its limited length,²² comprises some of his most intense poems. The imagery of violence, the war scenes, the tortures, the lynchings, ... are an everyday reality for *the New Creatures*, who face these and many more dangers in order to secure their freedom and independence from *the Lords*. The idea of the necessity of violence to liberate and redeem society might have been picked up by Morrison in the writings of William Blake, most of whose works written in the early 1790's represented the French Revolution as the purifying violence that, according to biblical prophecy, portended the imminent redemption of humanity and the world.^{clxxv} Upon being asked whether civilization —"city life, technology, habits, behavior, social rules, institutions, all of that"—has to be sacrificed to reclaim our freedom, Morrison replied:

How important is "all that" to you? Is it more or less important to you than your freedom? If it's less important, then you can leave it alone. If it's more important, then you have to destroy it. By yourself - for yourself. Each person for himself. If you want your true self to survive.^{clxxvi}

However, due to the overwhelming violence and hardship, Morrison claims most people aren't willing to give up their comfortable lives of captivity in *the city*. In the Lizzie James interview, Morrison explains why he believes people resist being liberated and cling to their cages:

I offer images – I conjure memories of freedom that can still be reached – like the Doors, right? But we can only open the doors – we can't drag people through. I can't free them unless they want to be free – more than anything else.... Maybe primitive people have less bullshit to let go of, to give up. A person has to be willing to give up everything – not just wealth. You have to let go of all to get to

²² The volume of *The Lords* contains 79 poems, whereas *The New Creatures* only contains 45. The two posthumously published volumes both exceed the amount of 200 pages.

the other side. Most people aren't willing to do that. . . . I think people resist freedom because they're afraid of the unknown. But it's ironic... That unknown was once very well known. It's where our souls belong... The only solution is to confront them – confront yourself – with the greatest fear imaginable. Expose yourself to your deepest fear. After that, fear has no power, and fear of freedom shrinks and vanishes. You are free.^{clxxvii}

4.2 The Women of the American Night

Artaud carried a similar belief on people's mentality and courage when it comes to the freedom they have a potential to possess. In *Theatre and its Double*, he wrote the following about the fear people foster for independence:

If the theater has been created as an outlet for our repressions, the agonized poetry expressed in its bizarre corruptions of the facts of life demonstrates that life's intensity is still intact and asks only to be better directed. But no matter how loudly we clamor for magic in our lives, we are really afraid of pursuing an existence entirely under its influence and sign.^{clxxviii}

Even though both statements refer to people in general, women seem to have less difficulties to let go of everything and to pursue "an existence entirely under [magic's] influence," since they are, according to Morrison, more naturally inclined towards the Semiotic. Consequently, female characters, such as the "Lizard woman," are an important part of *The New Creatures*. Many scenes of the poems in Morrison's second volume are descriptions of the women inhabiting and roaming around *the wilderness*. Even certain women inhabiting the semi-wilderness of the ghetto, thus still living inside *the city*, are part of *the New Creatures*. They not only safeguarded their authenticity and independence from *the Lords*, but actually form a connection with and to *the wilderness*, through which they guide people out of *the city*:

He goes to see the girl
of the ghetto.
Dark savage streets.
A hut, lighted by candle.
She is magician
Female prophet

Sorceress
Dressed in the past
All arrayed.

The stars
The moon
She reads the future
in your hand.^{clxxix}

The "girl of the ghetto" is one of those mediators between the two worlds, the Symbolic and the Semiotic. Still connected to *the city*, the girl of the ghetto is a "magician / Female prophet / Sorceress," who can guide people out of there, towards "the stars / the moon," the Semiotic realm. The role of the women in *The New Creatures* is somewhat problematized by the fact that art, whether Symbolic or Semiotic, is predominantly a masculine occupation, even more during Morrison's time than today's age. When Tony Thomas inquired Morrison about the role of women in art, referring to one of his lines in *The Lords* ("It is wrong to assume cinema belongs to women"), Morrison replied thusly: "Well, it's that masculine desire to dominate life, rather than just accepting it and flowing with it. And I think that is responsible for the creation of films and a lot of other things." After which Thomas asked the following question: "Men are dominant in the arts, as writers, composers, actors, almost everything. You think [women are] wise to keep out of it?" To which Morrison responded: "It's a contradiction, cause I'm totally hung up on the art game. But women have less need to re-establish a connection with life because they are life."^{clxxx}

Now we arrive at the final stage of Morrison's philosophical framework. It formed the drive and ultimate goal of all Morrison's artistic endeavours, both on and off stage and the highlight of his philosophy. When life in *the wilderness* is firmly rooted in the new mythology, when the connection with the primordial unity, the impulse for life, the Semiotic realm is finally re-established, all of the ingredients are gathered to reach the apogee, climax and culmination of Morrison's literary philosophy, transcendence:

In just such a manner, I believe, the cultured Greek felt himself neutralized by the sight of the chorus of satyrs, and the next effect of Dionysian tragedy is that the state and society, in general the gap between man and man, give way to an invincible feeling of unity, which leads back to the heart of nature.^{clxxxi}

Chapter 5: The Doors of Perception

Metamorphose. An object is cut off from its name, baits, associations. Detached, it becomes only the thing, in and of itself. When this disintegration into pure existence is at last achieved, the object is free to become endlessly anything.^{clxxxii}

The aim of the happening is to cure boredom, wash the eyes, make childlike reconnections with the stream of life. Its lowest, widest aim is for purgation of perception. The happening attempts to engage all the senses, the total organism, and achieve total response in the face of traditional arts which focus on narrower inlets of sensation.^{clxxxiii}

• •

The transcendent stage, the third²³ and final stage of Morrison's philosophy, forms the apogee, the climax and the culmination of his poetic universe; it is where everything ultimately leads to. The entire world of art begins and ends in this stage, as it is the basis for the unlimited creativity and imagination which is so crucial for any serious concept of art. Upon finally reaching transcendence, the individual will experience the sublime, unmediated universe in its entirety and will have access to any imaginable version of what we call reality, life and the eternal universe. Past, present and future will emerge as one in an endless space-time continuum. Consequently, the transcendence that is sought exists beyond the physical world which is framed by the parameters of time and space. Joseph Campbell properly defines transcendence as that which is beyond all concepts:

[M]ale and female are two aspects of one principle.... You're born in only one aspect of your actual metaphysical duality, you might say. This is represented in the mystery religions, where an individual goes through a series of initiations opening him out inside into a deeper and deeper depth of himself, and there comes a moment when he realises that he is both mortal and immortal, both male and female.^{clxxxiv}

²³ After first the Apollonian stage in *the city* and second the Dionysian stage in *the wilderness*.

The idea of the "*Metamorphose*" is found in Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, where Nietzsche describes the process of spiritual transformation through a series of metamorphoses.

5.1 Blake's Legacy

However, the transcendental stage of Morrison's philosophy is predominantly influenced by the ideas and writings of that other infamous European Idealist and great role model for Morrison: William Blake. William Blake's transcendental theories are most profoundly represented in his work *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in which Aldous Huxley found the title for his famous essay *The Doors of Perception*, which on its turn was the inspiration for band name *The Doors*. Although applicable to William Blake's full body of poetry, this work especially is one of the strangest and most compelling works of literature in the English language. In Blake's own time, as well as today, the work was incredibly obscure, and yet highly controversial because of its celebration of individual freedom along with unrepressed physical energy and desire. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is often referred to as a prophetic work which provides a guide or 'manifesto' for the individual to forge a path to freedom from the constraints of the world "through the progression of contraries." In the 1800's, an interest in the alliance between the mind and the imagination challenged traditional views on aesthetics and redefined the boundaries to make room for disproportion, obscurity and monster-like appearances. As Beatriz Moreno argues, the sublime became a way of thinking about excess as the key to a new kind of subjectivity that delighted the experience of Terror, integral to Morrison's work. Inspired by writers advocating the cultivation of the imagination, Morrison began experimenting with the expansion of his own perception and developing methods of inciting sensory activity.^{clxxxv} Like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, the works of Blake and Huxley address the theme of expanding one's consciousness in order to encompass the world of endless possibilities. Blake and Huxley, however, pay particular interest to the idea of the endless possibilities of an open mind and the concept of the infinite, as related to the Romantic sublime, which strongly appealed to Morrison's dark side.^{clxxxvi} Parallel with his writings, Blake himself, too, has always been a strange figure within the English literary canon: he "is often referred to as the first of the British Romantics,"^{clxxxvii} yet he is radically different from all of them, regarding both his themes and his language. It is remarkably

impossible to relate Blake to one of his peers, later Romantic poets or most other authors before or after him. William Blake, just like Morrison after him, believed people didn't live up to the full potential of their reality, but lived a life dictated to them by oppressive powers. For Blake, these would be the power of the institutions from the dogmatic empirical ideology prevalent in 18th century Britain. These powers deceived and condemned people to live in a narrowed, limited reality, resulting in Blake's observation that "man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern."^{clxxxviii} The impact of a narrowed perception on mankind is, according to Blake, more alarming than it initially seems. Leading Blake scholar Saree Makdisi connects the limited reality to the biblical concept of the fall:

Indeed, it is precisely in accepting that what can be perceived defines what is possible, and that what is possible defines what can be perceived, that the fall takes place, every day. The fall in other words, does not constitute a reality. Rather, it constitutes a certain highly circumscribed ontology of perception and of being—a mode of perceiving which is precisely what makes reality real to the limited forms of life appropriate to it. The latter, stripped of the capacity for imagination, and "bound down / To earth by their narrowing perceptions," regard this fallen world as the only world, this reality as the only possible reality and themselves as the only possible forms of being.^{clxxxix24}

Blake diagnoses the people around him as fallen, as "stripped of their capacity for imagination," as bound down, but immediately provides a cure for said disease, with that one most famous line: "If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is: infinite."^{cxc} Compare this to Morrison's line: "When this disintegration into pure existence is at last achieved, the object is free to become endlessly anything." With both writers, the idea of purity and limitlessness is present after this particular "disintegration," or cleansing, yet how does one reach this transcendence? The final stage of Blake's and Morrison's philosophy is reached by a

²⁴ It is important to keep in mind that Blake's concept of imagination is not the same as its limited meaning nowadays of simply thinking up things. In Blake's time, imagination held a *power to create* and it was feared too: "After all, the defendants in the 1790s treason trials were accused of –and some indeed would be hanged for– "compassing or *imagining* the death of the King", a charge that recognizes no meaningful distinction between a supposedly "immaterial" thought and a material action." (Makdisi 2003: 266)

symbiosis of the two counterparts. There lies the core of it all: Body and Soul, Good and Evil, Heaven and Hell, are two sides of the same amulet; Man needs *both* in order to be whole. "Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence."^{cxci} Blake never proposed to reverse the religious morals (and certainly not for cheap upheaval, which certain slovenly readers dared to state); he suggests that "the real Good is not abandonment of all restraints but a *marriage*, or union of the contraries, of desire and restraint, energy and reason, the promptings of Hell and the denials of Heaven."^{cxcii} Consequently, Blake has often been described as a writer of visionary or transcendental poetry, meaning that the idea of unlimited imagination and perception gave way to certain (divine) visions. Northrop Frye defined visionary, in reference to William Blake, in claiming that "by vision he meant the view of the world, not as it might be, still less as it ordinarily appears, but as it really is when it is seen by human consciousness at its greatest height and intensity." Frye points to the writing of William Blake to "show that the formal principles of this heightened vision are constantly latent in the mind"^{cxci} and are only revelled during heightened special moments of awareness. So, the visionary act is a matter of attaining altered states of consciousness, which to Morrison means "to engage all the senses, the total organism, and achieve total response." Importantly, right at the core of his philosophy, Blake shapes his concept of God, connecting it to Man's imagination and transcendence. Blake believes Man is "evolving towards the eternal, a state in which thought and life, body and mind, are unified and coextensive, strengthening and reaffirming each other"^{cxci} and that at a given point in time, *everyone* will be free and infinite and it will be that, in Blake's words, "Man is all Imagination and God is Man and exists in us and we in him. The eternal body of Man is the Imagination and that is God Himself."^{cxci} And Man's righteous attitude towards God is, it should come as no surprise, Art. Blake assigns the ability of cleansing one's perception, of evoking and ultimately maintaining infinity, to art: "The worship of God is: Honouring his gifts in other men, each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best; for there is no other God." Sereek Makdisi and Terance Dawson come surprisingly close together in interpreting this particular line. Makdisi states that "for Blake it is precisely in art that God, the 'eternal body of man' of which we are all members, is immanently produced; in other words, it is in art that humanity creates itself as God."^{cxci} Compare this to Dawson's statement:

For Blake, artists, those who dedicate themselves to exploring the creative imagination are the great men. Ever since classical antiquity, it had been commonplace to attribute genius to great artists and to envisage this gift as God-given. Blake takes this argument into new territory: he is suggesting that artists *are* God.^{cxcvii}

Consequently, there is no distinction for Blake in the works of poets, mystics, philosophers or prophets. All of them are examples of men open to their "Spiritual body" and were defined by that capacity for the infinite opened up by poets and prophets activating the "poetic genius." In a conversation with Bishop Watson, Blake stated that "A prophet is a Seer, but the case is that the word *prophet*, to which later times affixed a new idea, was the Bible word for poet, and the word *prophesying* meant the art of *making poetry*."^{cxcviii} Hence Blake's notion of God is shaped in Man's "Imagination and Art," the creative process which has become possible by virtue of infinite perception.

5.2 The Marriage of Opposites

Infinite perception, according to Blake, unbridled creativity, is only possible through a *marriage*, a union of opposites and contraries. Only then can Man break out of a narrowed and externally imposed reality towards a reality of boundless and eternal possibilities and thus participating in the concept of infinite Paradise. Evidently, the idea of uniting dualities for purifying ends is also very present in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*:

With those two gods of art, Apollo and Dionysus, we establish our recognition that in the Greek world there exists a huge contrast, in origin and purposes, between the visual arts, the Apollonian, and the non-visual art of music, the Dionysian. These two very different drives go hand in hand, for the most part in open conflict with each other and simultaneously provoking each other all the time to new and more powerful offspring, in order to perpetuate in them the contest of that opposition, which the common word "Art" only seems to bridge, until at last, through a marvellous metaphysical act of the Greek "will," they appear paired up with each other and, as this pair, finally produce Attic tragedy,

as much a Dionysian as an Apollonian work of art. . . . Here, the lofty and highly praised artistic achievement of Attic tragedy and of the dramatic dithyramb presents itself before our eyes, as the common goal of both impulses, whose secret marriage partnership, after a long antecedent struggle, glorified itself with such a child — simultaneously Antigone and Cassandra. ^{cxcix}

The marriage of the Apollonian and the Dionysian gave birth to the art of tragedy, the Attic drama, which, according to Nietzsche, was "the most beautiful of all temples."^{cc} In order to reach transcendence, the ultimate state of limitlessness, we need the Apollonian *and* the Dionysian, life and death, light and darkness. In the Apollonian stage, one is bound by the rigid structures of the Symbolic culture, thus unable to ascend to an open and free correspondence with the unlimited universe; yet in the Dionysian stage, one has lost complete control over his own self and over meaning, thus unable to transfer ideas and meaning in a sensible and coherent way. The pure expression of the Dionysian stage is like a child's ramble, a shaman's drug-induced frenzy, which is in itself much further removed from the Attic drama than neatly composed poetry lacking vigour, strength and creativity. It is only when the unbounded vigour, strength and creative freedom of the Dionysian stage is combined with and restrained by the beauty and strict order of the Apollonian stage that magic will arise and unlimited imagination, the true creative force of an artist, will be unlocked within the greater experience. However, rarely is a person able to connect the two sides, the two rivalling opposites, and open up the doors of her/his perception, which in addition is also impossible to sustain for a longer period of time. Nietzsche, for example, predominantly seemed to employ the analytical, Apollonian stage in the approach of his ideas in most of his writings, yet at some point evidently managed to enter this magical realm of unbound imagination and in there, he was able to shape his ideas on the Dionysian/Apollonian dichotomy for the first time. In his famous essay *Nietzsche's 'Yes' to Life and the Apollonian Neutrality of Existence*, Robert Wicks argues that although Nietzsche claims to approach the difficulties of life from a Dionysian perspective, his philosophy of affirmation actually represents a more Apollonian approach.^{ccii} Because Nietzsche's philosophy of affirmation is based on excessive reflection, it is not Dionysian, which he describes as prereflective, immediate, expansive, and instinctual.^{ccii} Morrison, on the other hand, appeared to reside on the Dionysian side of life for most part, and consequently many of his —

unpublished— poems fail to coherently put the images and ideas present into comprehensive meaning. In the moments he was able to combine these forces, or control the Dionysian energy within them, he too entered the realm of unbound imagination and it was there that his radical and intense ideas took shape in the form of Apollonian beauty. For Morrison, however, "the doors of perception" meant something more. They meant self-discovery; they meant a joining together of ideas; they meant reinventing the everyday to make it new; they meant beauty; they meant horror; they meant anything and everything. Among other methods, Morrison provided poetry as a channel through which one could enter into different perceptions of the world.^{cciii} Consequently, one does not necessarily have to be an artist to be able to experience the wonders of this realm. Morrison didn't write his poetic manifestos for other writers or artists, but for everyone to read, since every individual's perception of identity and/or reality could potentially reach the same stage of limitlessness:

The eye looks vulgar
Inside its ugly shell.
Come out in the open
In all of your Brilliance.^{cciv}

Morrison's poetry can be seen as a calling out to anyone to step out of their "ugly shell," the narrow "cavern" of which William Blake and Plato spoke. A call to step out of the vulgarity of the limited Symbolic society, into the Semiotic and finally, hopefully "out in the open," to reach the "Brilliance" of the transcendental stage. Identities are formed within the Apollonian stage, yet a connection with the Dionysian stage will enable a person to limitlessly extend them, after which all the possibilities imaginable become endless:

Yoga powers. To make oneself invisible or small.
To become gigantic and reach to the farthest things.
To change the course of nature. To place oneself
anywhere in space or time. To summon the dead.
To exalt senses and perceive inaccessible images,
of events on other worlds, in one's deepest inner
mind, or in the minds of others.^{25ccv}

²⁵ Morrison later reworked this poem and titled it "POWER," leaving out the yoga reference, possibly because of its connotation with the hippie movement, with which he didn't wish to be associated.

Once the symbiosis of the two sides has been established, once that border has been crossed, the individual has the powers to limitlessly stretch the perception of their own identity and of the entire universe around her/him, to powers "exalt senses and perceive inaccessible images." It will enable her/him to change size, travel in time and space, "summon the dead" and even "change the course of nature"; all of which happens within the imagination of an individual's heightened consciousness, "in one's deepest inner mind." It was, however, the alchemical process²⁶ which served as a guideline for Morrison, as a metaphor for the entire journey towards transcendence, parallel to the way Nietzsche employed the birth of the Attic tragedy as a metaphor for the same journey. In both metaphors, the essence of the journey is very clear: the combining of contrasting elements. The metaphor of the alchemical process is best described in the following quote, attributed to Morrison by Danny Sugerman, second manager of The Doors:

First you have to have the period of disorder, chaos, returning to a primeval disaster region. Out of that you purify the elements and find a new seed of life, which transforms all life and all matter. . . . until finally, hopefully, you emerge and marry all those dualisms and opposites. Then you're not talking about evil and good anymore but something unified and pure.^{ccvi}

Morrison uses the myth and recipe of the philosopher's stone as an allegory for his philosophical journey towards transcendence: the alchemical couple, which consists of philosophical sulphur (male, hot, active, and therefore connected to the Apollonian and the Symbolic) and argent vive (female, cold, receptive, connected to the Dionysian and the Semiotic) must be united at the chemical wedding to produce the philosopher's stone.^{ccvii} The alchemical manuscript *Splendor Solis*, attributed to Salomon Trismosin, is an expression of ludus puerorum, "the process of inversion in the opus, the solve et coagula (dissolve and coagulate)."^{ccviii} The principle of this process is evident throughout Morrison's mythography. The solve et coagula is a paradoxical process whereby that which is hard is made soft (body dissolved into spirit) and that which is soft is made hard (spirit is congealed into form). In this way these opposites may become mingled into one eternity —spirit and body are united:^{ccix}

²⁶ See p. 52 of this paper.

Separate, purify, reunite. The formula of
Ars Magna, and its heir, the cinema.^{ccx}

The Ars Magna referred to would be the manuscript *Ars Magna* of Ramon Lull, which has been claimed to stand at the dawn of alchemy.²⁷

5.3 Full Circle

Campbell expresses the process of the alchemical marriage as “a typical hero act – departure, fulfilment, return.”^{ccxi} This is also the *opus circulatorium* of alchemy in which the “cycle of solve et coagula or separation and union has to be reiterated many times throughout the opus” and is often expressed in terms of a turning wheel.^{ccxii} Further adding to this, in the same line of thought it is useful to consider the circular movement present in Blake’s *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. While at its root the term innocence simply means “harmlessness,” by further extraction and implication of the concept it could also mean a lack of guilt or tie to what is sinful. Blake advocated the view that Innocence could be either “organised” or “unorganised,” that “[i]nnocence dwells with Wisdom, but never with Ignorance,” as he wrote in the margins of the manuscript of *The Four Zoas*.^{ccxiii} Since Innocence and Experience are states of the soul through which we pass, neither is a finality, both are necessary, and neither is wholly preferable to the other.^{ccxiv} It is Blake’s Post-Experience Innocence that Morrison posits in his poetry with clarity: the return not to exactly where the individual had come from, but rather to an awareness and acceptance of the world as it infinitely is.^{ccxv} At this point, the individual has come full circle. The doors are cleansed, the threshold can be crossed, the return to Innocence is possible:

The form is an angel of soul
from horse to man to boy
& back again^{ccxvi}

²⁷ Ars Magna – the “Great Art” or “Great Work”. The Spanish 13-14th century theologian Ramon Lull devised his Ars Magna, a series of rotating discs on a central axis. Each disc contained keywords or statements and as the wheels were turned, truths could be derived. This method was used in later centuries by a number of alchemists and Lull was posited alongside Hermes in a number of later alchemical and related documents (Faivre 1995: 137). Lull is also documented as recognising the wisdom of the Muslim philosophers (Campbell 1968: 129) and is attributed with introducing their methods and reasoning into his own.

Transcendence is reached, the highest of experiences, the most compelling of states of being. Throughout his poetry, Morrison demonstrates the proposition that when the Symbolic and the Semiotic are in accord, the male and female, light and dark, living and dying, then transcendence *is*. This is a statement of bliss, this is what Campbell calls *Sat Chit Ananda*:

Now I came to this idea of bliss because in Sanskrit, which is the great spiritual language of the world, there are three terms that represent the brink, the jumping-off place to the ocean of transcendence: *Sat, Chit, Ananda*. The word "*Sat*" means being. "*Chit*" means consciousness. "*Ananda*" means bliss or rapture.^{ccxvii}

Nietzsche compared it to the Attic tragedy, "the most beautiful of all temples," for William Blake is was nothing less than the conscious experience of God in infinity. Morrison employed paradise-like descriptions of secret "forests of azure," the metaphorical physical embodiment of this state of bliss, to which one will be taken upon reaching transcendence. Significantly, the journey has followed the path of the sun, from east to west. Across the sea, across the land to come to rest in the city of L.A. Morrison brings his vision to stand at the water's edge where children play on the beach. The west is the threshold between day and night and their corresponding rulers of sun and moon, male and female, Symbolic and Semiotic.^{scxviii} This is where people gather on the beach, this is where people race towards the sea, where laughter is heard, this is the joy of the experience of infinite life:

**We were drawn down long from
a deep sleep, & awaken'd
at dayfall & led thru dew wet
jungle to the swift summit,
o'er looking
The sea. . . .**

**A vast radiant beach & a cool
jeweled moon. Couples naked
race down by its quiet side &
we laugh like soft mad children,
smug in the wooly cotton brains
of infancy.**

**The music & voices are all
around us.**

**Choose, They croon
The ancient ones
The time has come again
Choose now, They croon
Beneath the moon
Beside an ancient lake**

**Enter again the sweet forest
Enter the hot dream, come w/us
Everything is broken up
& dances.**

**The river contains specimens
The voices of singing women
call us on the far shore**

**& they are saying
"Forget the Night
live w/us in the Forests
of azure"**

**I tell you this;
no eternal reward will
forgive us now for
wasting the dawn**

**out here on the perimeter
there are no stars
Out here we is stoned
immaculate.**

PART 2: Contextualization of Morrison's Poetic Tone & Style

Chapter 6: Morrison & the Beat Generation

In the first part of this paper I have discussed and analyzed the philosophical and theoretical framework encasing Morrison's poetic universe in several of its most important aspects, such as *the city* and their *Lords*; *the wilderness*, *the American Night* and their *New Creatures* and the role of cinema and art throughout it all. As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, it is extremely difficult to understand Morrison's poetry without first understanding the framework supporting and connecting the network of poems. However, now the framework has been established, I will focus more closely on Morrison's poetry in itself and thematically and stylistically contextualize it in the larger scope of 20th century American poetry in the second and final part of this paper. The first chapter will deal with Morrison's thematic content, which was, not surprisingly, highly indebted to the Beat Generation. The second and third chapter will deal with Morrison's unique and distinct poetic style. In the second chapter I will discuss and analyze the stylistic aspects of his first volume of poetry, titled *The Lords*, in the third chapter I will deal with his later poetry. In each chapter relevant comparisons are made with several literary movements active either before or during Morrison's time.

6.1 Thematic parallels

Thematically, Morrison comes closest to the writers of the Beat Generation, and their poet-king Allen Ginsberg in particular. The father of American poetry, Walt Whitman, who in *Leaves of Grass* wrote his declaration of the sacred self, an egalitarian America and the immortality of the soul, was the precursor and the model for the American poet's sense of duty to expand their own, and their nation's consciousness. Morrison arguably took his cue as much from Ginsberg's adoption of Whitman's symbolic poetic principle, as he did from William Blake's transcendental poetry. Not coincidentally, Ginsberg's choice of the following lines of Walt Whitman for the epigraph to his famous poem *Howl* strongly echoes Blake's infamous line:^{ccxix}

Unscrew the locks from the doors!

Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!^{ccxx}

It should therefore come as no surprise that Morrison's poetry is very similar to Ginsberg's in subject matter, especially regarding their use of violent imagery with

archetypal symbols to invoke a nightmarish sense of reality in order to establish the Nietzschean apocalyptic, pessimist portrayal of their times.^{ccxxi} In one particular poem Morrison consciously and overtly uses a form created by Ginsberg in the poem *America*, the creation of which on its turn was heavily drawn from Whitman. Following Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, Ginsberg openly addresses his native country in this poem ("*America, . . . I am addressing you.*"), and to further reinforce the connection, Ginsberg uses the form of Whitmanian repetition to shape his poem:

America I've given you all and now I'm nothing.
America two dollars and twentyseven cents January 17, 1956.
I can't stand my own mind.
America when will we end the human war?
Go fuck yourself with your atom bomb
I don't feel good don't bother me.
I won't write my poem till I'm in my right mind.
America when will you be angelic?
When will you take off your clothes?
When will you look at yourself through the grave?
America why are your libraries full of tears?^{ccxxii}

Morrison, however, doesn't address America in his poem, but *Lamerica*: a poetic symbol he created to capture the society around him within one single urbanized setting.²⁸ He sees the city in modernist and symbolist terms: L.A. is seen as a paradigm for the United States, or in more general terms, the metropolis as a metaphorical reflection of society, with its population heavily concentrated in urban areas. This symbol contains a definite sense of dualism by which, taken through the almost mantra-like process of its synthesis, we are shown how it recalls the sensation of the unbridled city:^{ccxxiii}

²⁸ Throughout Morrison's poetry, this concept orthographically appears as: *L'America/LAmerica/Lamerica/lamerica*. The reasons behind this peculiar variation are as of yet unknown.

lamerica
 emeralds in glass
 lamerica
 searchlights in twi-light
 lamerica
 stoned streets in the pale dawn
 lamerica
 robed in exile
 lamerica
 swift beat of a proud heart
 lamerica
 eyes like twenty

lamerica
 swift dream
 lamerica
 frozen heart
 lamerica
 soldiers doom
 lamerica
 clouds & struggles
 lamerica
 Nighthawk
 doomed from the start ^{ccxxiv}

In this poem, all the neon horrors and nightmares of modern society are present, such as luscious wealth ("emeralds in glass"), the predominance of vision and mind over body ("eyes like twenty," "frozen heart") and violence and struggle ("soldiers doom," "robed in exile").^{ccxxv} It is only upon realizing that the urban creatures roaming in *lamerica* are meant to be a poetically distorted reflection of us, modern humans, that the fragments of society, held up to us as a mirror of every individual through the experience of the author, become familiar,^{ccxxvi} additionally suggested by the claim that "we all live in the city."²⁹ Both Morrison's and Ginsberg's poems are seeded in deep pessimism. Not only does Morrison claim we all live in the city, but the modern human is even "doomed from the start." Morrison used Ginsberg's template and further compressed it to the alternation of the addressee ("lamerica") and an ongoing series of subsequent, abstract yet sharp and chiding metaphors to describe it. Morrison's poem however, ends on a hopeful, if not open, note:

Then stop.
 Go.
 The Wilderness in between.^{ccxxvii}

Ginsberg's poetry howbeit is slightly more subtle in its illumination of the path to transcendence than the overtly Idealist dimension which has been shown to be a key aspect of Morrison's poetics. The free-verse style of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and the early experiments of the Deep Image poets, combined with Ginsberg's apocalyptic tone and gritty perception of America in *Howl and other poems* (1957), provided the structural models for Morrison's longer poems such as *An American Prayer*, many of which also focus on several aspects of society in terms of a psychological landscape and

²⁹ See p. 20 of this paper.

its imperfections. *An American Prayer* could be read literally with the effect of an overwhelming sense of malaise and discontentment on the poet's account, prominently present in the following lines:

We're perched headlong
on the edge of boredom
We're reaching for death
on the end of a candle
We're trying for something
That's already found us^{ccxxviii}

Or it could —and I believe it should— be read figuratively/metaphorically as a representation of the state of mid-20th century American society. In the latter interpretation, the whole of society is identified as bored and lifeless, with everyone hoping for death that has already come.³⁰ However, whether the poem is interpreted literally or metaphorically, the reader cannot escape the pervasive sense of despondency. The dramatic effect of these six lines stems directly from their structural organisation. All three of the grammatical units open with the first-person plural personal pronoun, uniting both the poet, the lyrical 'I' and the readers in an existential verdict: we are. The first line confesses the tiresome, quotidian hopelessness of everyday life, "perched headlong on the edge of boredom." In the second line, the lyrical 'I' confesses their desire for death, even actively reaching for it. Yet, in a great turn of events, death has already found them, without them realizing it. In other words, people have slowly died within their captivity and enslavement by *the Lords* and now long for real death to come and take them away. To increase the dramatic effect to a maximum, all three grammatical units are broken in half, with the second half of the unit, the conclusion, indented, delayed, in the poem's typography. The more subtle poems of Morrison's oeuvre, of which *An American Prayer* is an excellent example, take on a multi-layered depth filled with allusion, imagery, mood and meaning that is either quite sublime or disconcerting. Morrison consciously chooses androgynous symbols and metaphorical figures to convey the mutability and temporality of his era.^{ccxxix} Further sustaining the pessimistic mood, the presence of a highly mythologized figure of death is never far away:

³⁰ For a full discussion of the prevalent malaise, disease and sense of death in Morrison's poetic universe, see chapters 1-3.

Do you know how pale & wanton thrilling
comes death on a strange hour
unannounced, unplanned for
like a scaring over-friendly guest you've
brought to bed
Death makes angels of us all
& gives us wings
where we had shoulders
smooth as raven's
claws^{CCXXX}

The anthropomorphic figure of death remains a central figure throughout the poem and to which the lyrical 'I' is highly attracted. Death increasingly seems more like a god to be worshipped in ecstasy, qualified as "wonton thrilling" and "over-friendly", than a creature to be feared. Death will make angels out of regular, average people and raise them unto heavenly power and skill. Even the colour symbolism has reversed in these lines: the living, with "shoulders smooth as raven's claws", are connected to the raven black colours, whereas the dead are identified with the innocence, purity and whiteness of angels in heaven. Morrison's poetic recreation of the notion of death is highly similar to Ginsberg's evocation and incarnation of the nightmarish image of *Moloch*, the Phoenician god of fire to whom people sacrificed their own newborn children, in the second section of *Howl*. Ginsberg reshaped the image of *Moloch* to an actualized version of the American society of his days: "Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is running / money! Moloch whose fingers are ten armies! Moloch whose breast / is a cannibal dynamo! Moloch whose ear is a smoking tomb!"^{ccxxxi} To Ginsberg, *Moloch* is a mental system, *Moloch* is American history, American institutions, the Government, a social machinery of conventions that keeps Americans dreaming of "unobtainable dollars." The society he fiercely and emotionally accuses, described as a "sphinx of cement and aluminium [that] bashed open their skulls and ate up / their brains and imagination," is one that keeps people's deepest desires constraint.^{ccxxxii} Ginsberg's social charges in *Howl* strongly resemble Morrison's critique of mid-20th century American society present in his volume of *The Lords*, who shape his image of *Moloch*, and the rest of his work. Ginsberg's accusations are more emotionally charged, whereas Morrison's poetry sometimes seems distant and more analytical. Yet unlike Ginsberg, Morrison immediately provides his readers with extensively described solutions to what he believes could solve the issues he poetically indicts. While the

second section of *Howl* attacked the values and institutions of a system that creates ignorance and intolerance, section I, which was written later, extensively deals with the many different figures that are socially excluded due to those barriers. Ginsberg describes the myriad of characters that either voluntarily or by misfortune fell out of mid-20th century America's rigid system of social conformity. These "angelheaded hipsters"^{ccxxxiii} are the archetypal wandering heroes who live everywhere and nowhere, the Lord Byrons of the Beat Generation, all energy, intensity and passion.^{ccxxxiv} The figure of the traveller, the lost wanderer in search of something more, higher, deeper, is of great importance in both Beat literature and Morrison's poetic universe. Morrison often symbolises these people by the image of hitchhikers and travellers and they are closely connected to Morrison's landscape of the highway, an important and highly recurrent setting in Morrison's poetic universe:³¹

Welcome to the American Night
 where dogs bite
 to find the voice
 the face the fate the fame
 to be tamed
 by The Night
 in a quiet soft luxuriant
 car
 Hitchhikers line the Great Highway^{ccxxxv}

The poem opens with a grant declaration of hospitality, yet this hospitality is immediately tempered, if not nullified, by the subsequent line: "where dogs bite". The reader should never forget the vicious, yet honest terror of the *wilderness*. *The American Night* is indeed dark and dangerous, especially for those unfamiliar to its hostile terrains and is sharply contrasted with the "quiet soft luxuriant / car" in the poem, Morrison's all-time symbol for modern humans from *the city*, who voluntarily exchanged their freedom of identity for comfort and security. Somehow, these inhabitants of *the city* ended up on the highway, roaming through *the American Night*, lost in its darkness. At the end of the poem, the car almost graphically sails across the page in perfect separateness along next to the last line, the line of "Hitchhikers", *the New Creatures*, along the road. The car is even geometrically distinct, in its "soft" three-letter squareness, from the ligamentous line of hitchhikers along the highway. The reader's

³¹ Cfr. *Infra*

eye falls from the line above into the car, comfortably flush with the right margin of the preceding line, dislocated by virtue of its drastic indentation, yet not sticking out. The voice, the face, and fate, which in the middle lines of the poem seem to produce a solution to the darkness, harshness and unpleasant hostility of the American Night, have by the end of their trajectory transmuted into "fame". "The face" in the poem, in resonance with the separation from the mother,³² marks the beginning of the alienation-within-the-seat-of-power-experienced by those in the car as it sails by the hitchhikers out in the American Night. Fame signifies to us that the process is complete, the car door locked shut, protected against the 'social undesirables' outside in "The Night". In this universe there is no mercy, and seemingly no escape. The moments of hope, identity and then certainty, respectively "the voice" and "the face" and "the fate", follow up on each other, juxtaposed, in a mad dash, in a flash, especially in comparison to the measured tempo of the rest of the poem. Yet ultimately, inevitably, every outsider is "tamed" by "The Night" and falls victim to its *wilderness*.^{ccxxxvi}

Another striking parallel between the Beat poets and Morrison is that the urban landscape was so important for them that their literature would probably have never developed the way it did without it. Bums, drug addicts, wanderers and artists could be seen in the streets of Denver and New York, and in the verses of the Beat poets. In section I Ginsberg's heroes spend their nights of decadence out "dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry / fix" or sitting "in the / supernatural darkness of cold-water flats" and chaining "themselves to subways for the endless ride from Battery to holy / Bronx with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, alcohol and cock and endless balls."^{ccxxxvii} All these descriptions are only possible in the kind of urban circles frequented by both Ginsberg and Morrison and their entourage of fellow artists.^{ccxxxviii} Consequently, these cringing, wandering, lost, searching, desperate figures compare well to Morrison's "real crowd life" residing and hiding in the "grimy ring immediately surrounding the daylight business district" of his *city*, sometimes even to his *New Creatures*.³³ Furthermore, just like Ginsberg, Morrison didn't shun explicit or vulgar language in his poetry:

³² See p. 39 of this paper;

³³ See p. 20 of this paper.

The Moths & atheists are double divine
 & dying
 We live, we die
 & death not ends it
 Journey we more into the
 Nightmare
 Cling to life
 our passion'd flower
 Cling to cunts & cocks
 of despair
 We got our final vision
 by clap
 Columbus' groin got
 filled w/ green death

 (I touched her thigh
 & death smiled)^{ccxxxix}

Once again, the reader is confronted with the figure of death in almost every line, behind every corner, on every page. Life inside *the city* is here briefly summarized as: "We live, we die / & death not ends it." After the subject's symbolic 'death', after they have lost their own identity and free will, they only "journey . . . more into the / Nightmare". They can only hope to "cling to life" to save them, or cling to obscure, perverted sex ("cunts & cocks of despair") which might be their only redemption from this waking nightmare. Columbus, who had brought and spread European patriarchal civilization to the wild, savage tribes of the West like a disease, could arguably be seen as America's very first *Lord*: he had traded sex, the primordial connection with life, for "green death".

Stylistically, both Morrison and Ginsberg exclusively employ a free-verse form to shape their poetry, yet the outcome is rather different. Ginsberg preferably wrote in long, meandering, Whitmanian sentences that follow a frantic and emotive speech and only break the poetic line to fit the length of his own breath, pausing for air and then launching another line, often starting with the same repeated word as the previous line. Ginsberg fancied himself a poet in the style of a bebop musician since his style of writing was highly influenced by, if not modelled on, the long, nervous and capricious saxophone solos of the bebop era, such as those of Charlie Parker and Lester Young, who would play a series of long improvised phrases, pausing for breath and starting another. The rhythm, meter and length of verse was also distinctly more similar to jazz music than it was to traditional styles. "I depended on the word 'who' to keep the beat, a base to keep

measure, return to and take off again onto another streak of invention," Ginsberg explained in his 1959 essay *Notes Written on Finally Recording Howl* about his approach in creating the poem.^{ccxi} Jazz music is distinct in its stressing of the second and fourth beats, as in traditional African music, opposed to the stressing of the first and third beats, as in Western (European) music. Consequently, Beat poetry frequently has a much looser, more syncopated rhythm, similar to the bebop jazz phrases of their time.^{ccxli} Morrison's poetic style, which will be discussed at length in the following chapters, is on the other hand mostly built of short, concise sentences, approximating between 3-7 words, to convey an abstract or 'deep' image which then is usually juxtaposed to another seemingly unrelated abstract image. The main difference being that Ginsberg's spontaneous poetic rants, often accompanied by dashes of exhaustion and exclamation marks, transmit much more emotional involvement with the subject at hand (*"Moloch in whom I sit lonely!"*). Morrison's more distant, analytical and abstract style on the other hand provides the reader with striking, intimate, sometimes horrifying images from deep within the subconsciousness. The *(L)America* poems are a clear example of the difference in style between both poets: where Ginsberg's poem often contains three or four sentences after the apostrophe of America containing personal outbursts (*"America I've given you all and now I'm nothing."*), Morrison only employs one short sentence each time, usually two or three words in length, one line only one. Even in his more personal, emotional poems Morrison seems to have a quieter tone of uncharged disappointment rather than Ginsberg's bursts of emotional outcries, as is audibly demonstrated in Morrison's poem *Hurricane & Eclipse*:

I wish a storm would
come & blow this shit
away. Or a bomb to
burn the Town & scour
the sea. I wish clean
death would come to me. . . .

The end of the dream
will be when it
matters

all things lie
Buddha will forgive me
Buddha will^{ccxlii}

6.2 The Empire Strikes Back

One of the most striking similarities between Morrison and Ginsberg, however, will not be found in the verses of both writers, but in the way their country consecutively regarded them as the voice of the counterculture and the way in which leading authorities responded to that role. In the year 1957, a San Francisco district Attorney waged an attempt to ban or at least censor the publication of *Howl and Other Poems* based on obscenity charges, on top of Ginsberg's several personal prosecutions by the FBI in fear of his communist/Marxist predilection. Thirteen years later, Morrison, too, was arrested and tried in Miami based on obscenity charges. As the counterculture grew in its opposition to social injustice and conformity, the central authorities' attempts and the means to stop them in their course significantly grew as well. It seemed the authorities were using ideology, moral values and social conventions as their weapons, not only in election propaganda, but in judicial domains as well to keep the counterculture from disrupting the social order.

When Ginsberg was writing *Howl* he could not have possibly imagined the groundbreaking landslide that his book would cause in public opinion. It was a poem that he never expected to publish, thus writing it with total freedom, as if to himself, without any hesitations regarding the coarse language, the sexual imagery and the allusions to drug use it contains. When the books arrived in San Francisco, Chester McPhee, the city collector of customs seized 520 copies under the claim that the book was obscene and indecent. After the seizure, authorities refused to go on with any legal proceedings, so customs had to release the copies seized. But it was not long before the book was in the spotlight again. On June 3 1957, Shigeyoshi Murao, the clerk of City Lights bookstore, was arrested by two undercover police agents to whom, they said, he tried to sell *Howl and Other Poems*. The Japanese clerk was a close friend of Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, the co-founder of the publishing house City Lights Books in San Francisco which published the volume, quickly followed by the arrest of Ferlinghetti. Two months later the "Howl"-trial began.^{ccxlili} The publishing house was prosecuted under obscenity charges and the entire nation meticulously followed the course of the trial, widely covered in media nationwide and instantaneously propelling Ginsberg to a near rock-star fame. In the end, Judge Clayton W. Horn ruled in favour of the defendant.

In his final sentence, he alluded to the founding fathers of America: "The authors of the First Amendment knew that novel and unconventional ideas might disturb the complacent, but they chose to encourage a freedom which they believed essential if vigorous enlightenment was ever to triumph over slothful ignorance." He also concluded that the notion of what is obscene depended on an assortment of social and cultural variables, making it impossible to establish a universal definition of obscenity. His final conclusion was that

the author of "Howl" has used those words because he believed that his portrayal required them as being in character. The People state that it is not necessary to use such words and that others would be more palatable to good taste. The answer is that life is not encased in one formula whereby everyone acts the same or conforms to a particular pattern...^{ccxliv}

The censorship conflict had not yet ended, however. During the Reagan era the Federal Communication Commission set an 'indecent' standard that "inhibited even the cutting-edge progressive Pacifica radio stations from broadcasting Allen's reading of his seminal poem."^{ccxlv} Nevertheless, the main battle had been won.^{ccxlv}

Thirteen years later in Florida, Jim Morrison had been filed and arrested on obscenity charges as well. From August to October of 1970, details on Jim Morrison's trial are given once again national attention. Despite lack of conclusive evidence, Judge Murray Goodman is determined to make an example out of Morrison —some have claimed for political reasons— and all efforts are made to convict him. It wasn't the first confrontation between Morrison and local authorities, however. The first clash occurred in the year of 1967 in New Haven, CT, where the police interrupted and cancelled a concert due to the riotous behaviour of the crowd. Morrison, who was further provoking the already turbulent crowd, was ultimately arrested on stage. Local authorities had also arrested several members of the press who provided extensive coverage of the incident. The following years, as The Doors gained popularity with America's youth, their concerts increased in size proportionate to their publicity. By March 1969, the group's very existence must have irked several conservative local governments, including the one of Florida governor Claude Kirk. Morrison's actions on that Miami night had Governor Kirk set out to silence, once and for all, the spokesmen of the counterculture. Surprisingly, for such a 'community-defiling' event, the felony and misdemeanour

charges were not levelled until "four days after his chaotic appearance before 12,000 young rock music fans at the city's Dinner Key Auditorium."^{ccxlvii} Yet, while the concert was being publicized as highly "traumatic" to those in attendance, not one of the attendees had been sufficiently upset to file the necessary charges. Luckily for the authorities, there was a 22-year-old clerk who just so happened to work for the state attorney's office and he agreed to sign off on the complaint.^{ccxlviii} To further clarify the plan to level "trumped up charges," the Acting Police Chief stated, "I've issued orders that as soon as we can find a policeman who witnessed it that we will take out a warrant for him."^{ccxlix} Yet no policeman was found thus eventually the 22-year-old clerk's services were employed. Thereafter, no time was wasted as there was an FBI memo "disseminated to the US Attorney, US Secret Service, 111th MI (Military Intelligence) Group in Miami and the 111th MI Group in Orlando as of March 4th."^{ccl} It appears that the FBI had concluded that one James Douglas Morrison (Morrison's full legal name) posed a serious security threat to the United States. The quest to obtain charges began immediately as the FBI internal memo of March 4th, 1969 notes:

Captain [blanked out under FOIA] said that he has interviewed a number of the officers and has sufficient information to obtain a warrant for MORRISON's arrest on a misdemeanour charge. Captain [blanked out under FOIA] said that he is continuing his investigation and will discuss the matter with the Florida State Attorney's Office in the hopes of obtaining a felony charge against MORRISON.^{ccli}

On March 5th, 1969 charges were levelled. However, now that Florida had been provided with charges to level against Jim Morrison there was a need to obtain the 'body.' Governor Kirk found himself dependent upon the FBI to 'deliver the goods' and must have been extremely thankful that, as a frequent visitor to his winter White House, he could count President Nixon amongst his close friends. On March 28th, 1969 the FBI provided a means for extradition and a manner to begin the trial by filing the charge of "Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution."^{cclii} There had been no illegal flight as at the time the group left Florida on March 2nd no charges had been filed as of yet. Obviously the charge would not have held up in a court of law but that didn't concern the FBI. Upon Morrison's surrender to authorities, the charges were summarily dropped, having had illegally accomplished their goal. An extradition order was filed and presented for

signature to Californian Governor and future President, Ronald Reagan. The staffs of governors Kirk of Florida and Reagan of California arranged extradition and the FBI was once again involved, reported the Orlando Sentinel.^{ccliii} The trial began on Aug. 20, 1970 and lasted for 15 days. It took another 35 days before the ultimate sentence was acquitted. Morrison was charged with lewd and lascivious behaviour as well as indecent exposure and profanity. He was facing up to three years' state time. Notwithstanding the trial featured several contradictory accounts and had presented no conclusive evidence, he was eventually convicted of indecent exposure and profanity. He had been acquitted of the felony charge of lewd and lascivious behaviour, however, reports The Miami Herald. His trial stretched out over 15 days — the amount of time usual for a death-penalty trial. On September 20th, Morrison was convicted with open profanity and indecent exposure, with the right to appeal, and given a 6 month prison sentence and a \$500 fine. While he was appealing the conviction, Morrison was allowed to remain free and headed back to California to finish working with the rest of the Doors on the album L.A. Woman. From there he booked a flight to Paris, France where he lived until his death on July 3, 1971.^{ccliv}

6.3 Morrison & McClure

Another important aspect in the relation between Jim Morrison and the Beat generation was Beat poet and close friend of Morrison, Michael McClure. Michael McClure is an American poet, playwright and novelist who found fame as one of the five poets (including Allen Ginsberg) who read at the famous San Francisco Six Gallery reading in 1955, which was rendered in barely fictionalized terms in Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*. He soon became a key member of the Beat Generation and is immortalized as "Pat McLearn" in Kerouac's *Big Sur*.^{cclv} He became friends with Morrison after Morrison's interest in McClure's rather controversial play *The Beard*, an erotic *succes de scandale*, a confrontation between Billy the Kid and Jean Harlow in a blue velvet eternity.^{cclvi} There were plans to make a movie adaptation of McClure's play *The Beard* with Morrison playing the main character Billy the Kid and they had a meeting together with a film producer in London. One morning, waking up after a twelve hour drinking binge with Morrison in London, McClure found and read Morrison's first draft

for what would become the volume of *The New Creatures*. He later stated in an interview that

Well, I woke up first the next morning, pretty hung over, and started poking around the apartment looking for something to read, and I found Jim's poetry manuscript. I sat down and read it and thought, holy smoke, this is fantastic, and I was just sort of like ragingly delighted to find such a beautiful first book of poetry. When Jim came down later, I told him what I thought, and we talked about it a bit, and he was interested in what to do with it. He wanted to be known as a poet, he didn't want to be. . . in other words. . . Jim was very serious about being a poet, and he didn't want to come in on top of being Jim-Morrison-the-big rock-singer . .

.cclvii

McClure then urged Morrison to get his poetry published and suggested to publish it privately and distribute it amongst friends to supersede Morrison's concern that it would be regarded as "rock-star poetry."^{cclviii} McClure offered to edit it together with his fiancée, Pamela Susan, to which the volume is dedicated. When the volume of poetry was finally published, McClure recalls in the interview, he found Jim sitting with the very first copy in his hand, holding the book, crying and said: "This is the first time I haven't been fucked." He repeated it a couple of times. McClure explains it was the first time Jim felt he had come through as himself, he had accomplished something real. McClure was and always remained a big fan of Morrison's poetry. In the interview he provides the interviewer with a short analysis of the volume:

Jim's book *The New Creatures* is a book of imagistic poetry with hints of the seventeenth century, with hints of Elizabethan Theater, and with hints of classical mythology, and it has a romantic personal viewpoint. I use romantic in a nineteenth century Shelleyian/Keatsian sense: "Snakeskin jacket/Indian eyes..." I mean, this is a nineteenth century poem, very personal, yet the poetry itself is adeptly twentieth century imagist poetry. It's almost mainstream, and it's good poetry, real fine poetry, considering its compression. Here we have a poem of what, six imagistic lines. I mean, one thinks of a sonnet of Shelley. It's like a flake, an obsidian chip flaked out of a sonnet of Shelley's. I think about the poem about Ensenada. It reminded me of William Carlos Williams' "The Red Wheelbarrow," one of the great objectivist poems.^{cclix}

The movie adaption of *The Beard* never came through, because after reading McClure's unpublished novel *The Adapt*, Morrison wanted to do a movie adaption of that one, titled *Saint Nicholas*. So, in the spring of 1969, McClure and Morrison got together for several weeks, rented an office space in the 9000 Sunset Building on the Sunset Strip and wrote the screenplay for the movie together. Until now, only one copy has surfaced of this legendary script, in the collection of the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.^{cclx} Morrison's manager would later recall:

It reminds me of *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*. It's about three cats in search of a psychic treasure...a young guy named Nicholas who lives in New York...a friend of his named Rourke who's a revolutionary-turned-neo-capitalist, and they both have long hair... They fly to Mexico and meet up with a black cat named Derner. They venture out on the desert to meet a half-breed border guard to make a score.^{cclxi}

Yet unfortunately, in the end the project never came through. McClure said in a later interview that

The novel is basically about sensory experience and it's a mystical novel... an adventure novel about an anarchist, visionary idealist coke dealer who is an outlaw motorcycle rider. Sort of a sociopath anarchist, artist, idealist, dope dealer, back in the days of the sixties when those were real people. . . . But I didn't like what it ended up being, because what we had originally created was a redwood tree. We created a huge script, instead of following a treatment. In a fit of creativity Jim took the redwood tree and cut it down to a ninety page toothpick. What we cut it to was not worthy of what we'd done. I think we should have begun over again following Jim's initial insight. But it didn't happen. It could have been a wonderful film with Jim in it, it would have been beautiful.^{cclxii}

Chapter 7: Prose poetry—The Style of The Lords

7.1 Morrison & the French Symbolists

The prose poem is a hybrid form, an anomaly if not a paradox or oxymoron. It can be said that the prose poem, born in rebellion against tradition, has itself become a tradition, and it will be noted approvingly that the prose poem blurs boundaries.^{cclxiii} It offers the enchantment of escape whether from the invisible chains of the superego, or from the oppressive reign of the alexandrine line, from which the French *poète maudit* Charles Baudelaire broke vehemently in his *Petits Poèmes en prose* (1862), which inaugurated and popularized the genre in France. After the publications of his verse collection *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857 and 1861), Baudelaire's later years focused on the prose poem, but instead of the ancient, mythic scenes portrayed by his predecessors, he writes mostly of modern Parisian life. For Baudelaire the additional liberty in length and style were attractive: he felt a capacity to better express abstractions. In those subsequent years, two ingredients for Baudelaire's verse-shift-to-prose, when his literary production turned from rhymed poetry to prose poetry, were in place: the efficacy of prose in developing his themes (city life, the infinite, the dream) and the effectiveness of the genre to diffuse his intensity.^{cclxiv} Every since, many scholars have tried to adequately define the genre of prose poetry, yet despite differences and ambiguities in experts' definitions of the prose poem, one can find a workable, if somewhat cryptic definition for the genre in Baudelaire. His conception allows one to differentiate a prose poem from other short prose works such as free verse or the short short. The clearest conception then, as now, for the prose poem is spelled out by Baudelaire in a letter to his editor-friend, Arsène Houssaye, in December 1861:

My dear friend, I'm sending you this little work of which it cannot be said, without injustice, that it has neither head nor tail, since, on the contrary, everything in it is both tail and head, alternately and reciprocally. . . . Which of us has not, during his ambitious days, dreamed of the miracle of a poetic prose, musical, without rhythm and without rhyme, supple enough and choppy enough to fit the soul's lyrical movements, the undulations of reverie, the jolts of consciousness?^{cclxv}

If Baudelaire set the prose poem in motion with his anecdotes, parables, short essays, and aphorisms, Arthur Rimbaud provides the great counter example in *Illuminations* and

Une Saison en enfer. The precocious Rimbaud — "you're not too serious when you're seventeen years old," he wrote when he was fifteen— renounced poetry and headed to Africa for a more 'serious' career in the munitions trade. But before he was twenty he had created the "visionary" prose poem or, in Martha Kinney's phrase, "the prose poem as a lantern, an illuminated container, casting images and phrases needed but barely understood." The prose poems in *Illuminations* are like dream landscapes and journeys, visionary fragments, brilliant but discontinuous. They represent a considerable advance in abstraction and compression, and they are revolutionary, too, in recommending a break down in order, "a wilful derangement of the senses," as a necessary regimen. Rimbaud, the poet as youthfully debauched seer, will take a romantic theme and render it in idiosyncratic and abstract terms.^{cclxvi} In France, the prose poem quickly became an established genre. Prose poetry represented freedom from the alexandrine, the tyrannical twelve-syllable line that ruled over French poetry with an inflexibility that made English blank verse seem positively libertine in comparison. The achievements of these poets and others made Paris the indisputable capital of the prose poem.

7.2 The American Prose Poem

In the English-speaking world, the prose poem never quite graduated to the status of a genre. William Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* could be rightfully categorised as a bold incentive towards prose poetry: a work so diverse that it resists any effort at codification. The American prose poem owes much to the French but veers off decisively to accommodate the *sui generis* work that transcends category. Edgar Allen Poe, whose influence on Baudelaire and Mallarmé was so great he is often granted the title of "uncle of the French prose poem," wrote a lengthy pseudo-scientific treatise in 1848, called *Eureka* in which he anticipated the Big Bang theory of the universe's genesis. Poe subtitled this 150 page treatise a Prose Poem, despite his own earlier declaration that a long poem is a "flat contradiction in terms." In that same line of thought, Gertrude Stein is worth considering as the mother of the American prose poem. The prose poems that constitute Stein's *Tender Buttons* initiate a tradition of experimentation and acceptance of the new form. Stein had a revolutionary poetic intent and *Tender Buttons* is a sustained effort at treating words as objects in their own

right rather than as symbolic representations of things. To this day no one has better captured the abstract music of sentences and paragraphs, nor has anyone departed so radically from the conventions of making sense while making such richly evocative poetry. Consider *A Dog* from *Tender Buttons*:

A little monkey goes like a donkey that means to say that means to say that more sighs last goes. Leave with it. A little monkey goes like a donkey.

At first this seems a sort of riddle, as if the writer's task were to suggest a thing without naming it (except in the title). It has charm, its rhymes are spirited, but it has something else as well. There is drama in the sentences and between them, the stock phrase ("that means to say") repeated to lend urgency, then the four accented monosyllables in a row ("more sighs last goes"), and finally the appearance of a resolution ("Leave with it"), with closure achieved by recapitulation of the initial theme. In a sense this prose poem has, in Walter Pater's famous formulation, aspired to the condition of music. It has achieved abstractness. But what *A Dog* also shows us is the abstract structure of syntax that precedes content and helps create meaning, charging common words like "sighs" and "goes" with a power of signification we didn't know they had.^{cclxvii}

During the decades that followed, the prose poem achieved an unprecedented level of popularity among American poets. Russell Edson is attracted to the idea of "a poetry freed from the definition of poetry, and a prose free of the necessities of fiction." Robert Bly associates prose with "the natural speech of a democratic language." For James Tate, the prose poem is an effective "means of seduction." For one thing, the deceptively simple packaging: the paragraph. Robert Hass explains that he was happy with one of his efforts because it "was exactly what the prose poem wasn't supposed to be. It was too much like the sound of expository prose." At the time of writing it seemed to Hass that he was exploring unknown territory. And in retrospect "it seems a sort of long escape." Any of the forms of prose can serve, from traditional rhetorical models to newfangled concoctions. Mark Jarman writes an "Epistle" and Joe Brainard writes "mini-essays" in the form of one-sentence poems. James Richardson specializes in what he calls "Vectors," which are aphorisms and "ten-second essays." Paul Violi's "Triptych" takes its form from TV Guides and Charles Bernstein taps the same source for the content of "Contradiction turns to rivalry." Tyrone Williams' "Cold Calls" consists of a

sequence of footnotes to an absent text. There are prose poems in the form of journal entries (Harry Mathews's *20 Lines a Day*), radically foreshortened fictions (Lydia Davis's "In the Garment District"), a fan letter (Amy Gerstler's "Dear Boy George"), a rant (Gabriel Gudding's "Defense of Poetry"), a linguistic stunt (Fran Carlen's "Anal Nap," in which only one vowel is used), an essay (Fanny Howe's "Doubt"), a political parable (Carolyn Forché's "The Colonel"), and other inventions, some of which can't be easily summarized. Mark Strand's "Chekhov: A Sestina" demonstrates that prose can accommodate the intricacies of that verse form, just as "Woods" in Emerson's journals can serve as a "prose sonnet." The appearance of such a poem as Tom Whalen's "Why I Hate Prose Poems" indicates that the prose poem has, for all the talk of its "subversive" nature, itself become a self-conscious genre inviting spoofery. So when Charles Simic won the Pulitzer Prize for *The World Doesn't End* in 1991 it seemed doubly significant, marking an event not only in Simic's reputation but in the placement and validation of the prose poem itself. Its legitimacy as a form or genre with a specific appeal to American poets could no longer be denied, since Simic's Pulitzer volume, like Mark Strand's jinxed volume thirteen years earlier, consisted mainly of prose poems, and it was defiantly as prose poems that they succeeded. In neither case was the prose tarted up to ape the supposed prettiness of verse. The writing was not self-consciously 'poetic.' On the contrary, the prose of these poems—one might say their 'prosaic' nature if a pejorative valence did not hang over that word—was crucial to their success.^{cclxviii}

Just like Simic's volume *The World Doesn't End*, the prose poems in Morrison's volume *The Lords* are brief, spare, sometimes chilling and dark, propelled by the rhythms of narrative prose. The French Symbolists needed to break the more imperiously with traditional forms and subject matter to liberate the genre of prose poetry. Almost a century later, Morrison embraced the genre with open arms to reach the wide range of expressivity and the freedom of style granted by the prose poem. The basic technique by which structure was imposed on formlessness was, it seems, the adoption of a genre to set the rhetorical pattern. Yet, the form of a prose poem is not an absence of form. The sentence and the paragraph in the prose poem act the part of the line and the stanza, and there are fewer rules and governing traditions to observe, since the prose poem has a relatively short history and has enjoyed outsider status for most of that time. Writing a prose poem can therefore feel like accepting the unconventional: it is a form that invites the practitioner to re-invent it.^{cclxix} Morrison's prose poems

effectively establish a conflicting ambiguity in the reader. The form of a prose poem allows for the poet to maximally enforce the transition of the message, without the barriers of lines, rhyme and meter: the poetic message is delivered to the reader using prose as medium, which as a result draws minimal attention away from the poetic message. Yet the reader might experience some conflict accepting the poetic dimension of the poem due to the lack of the expected poetic form, causing a hovering air of ambiguity characteristic for Morrison's prose poems:

A room moves over a landscape, uprooting the mind,
astonishing vision. A gray film melts off the
eyes, and runs down the cheeks. Farewell.

Modern life is a journey by car. The Passengers
change terribly in their reeking seats, or roam
from car to car, subject to unceasing transformation.
Inevitable progress is made toward the beginning
(there is no difference in terminals), as we
slice through cities, whose ripped backsides present
buildings. Sometimes other vessels, closed
worlds, vacuums, travel along beside to move
ahead or fall utterly behind.^{cclxx}

In this medium length, two stanza prose poem, Morrison paints a very gloomy, pessimistic picture of modern life and, due to its medium, the prose poem, its message is impeccably, irrefutably clear. The first stanza of this poem reveals an enigmatic and horrific description of the effect of the cinema, parodying its often sentimental character as the melted eyes are running down the spectators' cheeks instead of tears. After the dramatic ending of the first stanza ("Farewell."), the opening sentence of the second stanza introduces a —somewhat ordinary— metaphor, sustained by the rest of the stanza in an effort to elaborate the epiphany. Modern life is a journey by car: passengers change seats which are all equally smelly, thinking they have control over their own lives (as to where they sit in the car), yet all are unaware they are merely passengers in a driving car, with no conception of or influence on their destination. They might even change from one car to another, yet all the cars are headed in the same direction ("there is no difference in terminals"). Given the fact that all of Morrison's lines and poems densely cluster together, the "inevitable progress. . . . made towards the beginning" could refer to the beginning of the poem, which is the movie theatre, or the opening line of the

volume of *The Lords*: "Look where we worship."³⁴ The opening part of the poem scans perfectly as blank verse ("A room moves over a landscape, uprooting the mind, astonishing vision."), but it owes its force to the tension between the flatness of the delivery, the grotesque quality of the imagery and the exploration of the metaphor over the course of the following stanza. As is prominently present in the latter and the following poem, Morrison creates his unique tone by putting his understated prose style, the use of simple, declarative sentences, sometimes at a staccato pace, at the service of the fantastic and surreal. The result is the opening of endless hidden, mesmerizing universes within his prose poems, which start to function as dream narratives that end abruptly, enigmatically. One might almost treat them as prose fiction, except for their extreme brevity, the ambiguous ways they achieve resolution, and their author's unmistakably poetic intent.^{cclxxi}

The happening/event in which ether is introduced
into a roomful of people through air vents makes
the chemical an actor. Its agent, or injector,
is an artist-showman who creates a performance
to witness himself. The people consider themselves
audience, while they perform for each other,
and the gas acts out poems of its own through
the medium of the human body. This approaches
the psychology of the orgy while remaining in
the realm of the Game and its infinite permu-
tations.

The aim of the happening is to cure boredom,
wash the eyes, make childlike reconnections
with the stream of life. Its lowest, widest
aim is for purgation of perception. The happening
attempts to engage all the senses, the total
organism, and achieve total response in the face of
traditional arts which focus on narrower inlets
of sensation.^{cclxxii}

• •

The idea of "the happening/event" is prominently present in Morrison's poetry, since it is connected to breaking away from the spell of *the Lords*. Yet, instead of subjecting spectators to subconscious imagery to release their suppressed desires and instincts, *the*

³⁴ See p. 20 of this paper.

event makes poetry "of its own through the medium of the human body", which might serve as a metaphor for prose poetry, which creates poetry through the medium of the literary body, prose. While some may consider prose to be a host to the poetry, it has actually become the poetry itself, in the same respect the people who believe they are the audience of the show, have become themselves the poem. This succession of sentences, instead of lines, moves at a speed faster than verse to abruptly stop. The formulaic, explanatory last stanza of the poem strips down the action. The final goal of *the event*, its "lowest, widest aim" reminds the reader of the cleansing effect of the séance, with which it is inextricably linked. To get from one clause to the next in Morrison's prose poems requires a long leap: the clauses themselves are like free-floating fragments. The contrast between the descriptive first stanza and the informative second stanza almost seems modeled on a scientific textbook describing and explaining various physical phenomena, made possible only due to the radical freedom the prose poem guarantees, not in the least in order to "achieve total response in the face of traditional arts which focus on narrower inlets of sensation." In poems like these, it is evident that Morrison's poetry is typical of a literary kind that combines a dark pessimism with a radiant, transcendental idealism and is therefore transmitted in a medium able to range widely in tone and manner. Upon this canvas, Morrison has given a dazzling demonstration of a visionary language which he reconstructed part by part in the tradition of William Blake, Arthur Rimbaud and Friedrich Nietzsche.^{cclxxiii} The structure of Morrison's poem is a movement from captivity to redemption, bathing in an atmosphere of a cycle of great loss and a new compensatory resolution.^{cclxxiv}

7.3 Morrison & the Postmodernists

David Shields' manifesto is often regarded as an attempt to define what is called 'post-postmodernism', which means that Shields and Morrison stand at either side of the once so dominant genre of postmodernism: Morrison at the dawn and rise of the movement in the early 60's and Shields after the movement had peaked and made way for its successors, such as post-postmodernism. Consequently, both writers share many characteristics with the movement, the most important of which will be briefly discussed in this subchapter. Shields' metaphor of the spider web, with its "different cells [that] were spun and attached to each other" which ultimately creates a network of resonances, so that "if you pluck it at any point, the entire web will vibrate," strongly

resembles the famous metaphor of the rhizome structure to symbolize the workings of a postmodern literary piece. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, two gurus of contemporary social analysis, were the first to describe postmodernism using the metaphor of the 'rhizome'. This is the lateral root structure of certain plants, and the metaphor describes how all social and cultural activities in postmodernism are dispersed, divergent and decentralized systems and structures, contrasted with the organised, hierarchical, 'trunk-and-branch' structure of modernism. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome is based upon the theory of 'non-totalisable multiplicity', their new term for deterritorialised movement. They argue that hitherto knowledge has been organised by systematic and hierarchical principles, as the metaphor 'tree of knowledge' indicates. In opposition to these structural metaphors of 'arborescence' and trees, they pose the models of roots and rhizomes. In their concern to uproot these philosophical trees and to remove their foundations, the rhizome becomes a model of non-hierarchical ties that connect with others in random, unregulated relationships. Rhizomes flow in myriad directions constituting a network of multiplicities, hence, Deleuze coined the term 'rhizomatics' to refer to a form of 'nomadic thought'. Deleuze and Guattari's brand of postmodern thought seeks to liberate differences and intensities from the grip of structures which attempts to discipline and control rhizomatic movement. The schizo, rhizome and nomad are all models for Deleuze and Guattari's postmodern theme of breaking with repressive, representational identity and producing a fragmented, liberated, libidinal body. They represent emancipated, non-authoritarian modes of existence which refuse social regulation.^{cclxxv} Morrison's entire body of poetry in general, but the volume of *The Lords* in particular, is composed according to rhizomatic movement and patterns, although it seems unlikely that Morrison was familiar with the theories of either of the two postmodern theorists, or any of the other leading postmodern thinkers/writers of his decade. *The Lords* is to the utmost extent cut up into numerous symbolic images, the 'nodes' of the rhizome that laterally digress and reconnect with the images in other poems, which on their turn are scattered across the volume. It is in the activity of connecting all the communicating images, or nodes, that the reader will accomplish the recreation of the theoretic network of Morrison's aesthetic manifesto. All of those "thematic resonances", the connection of the different ideas and images, tied together will ultimately shape the entire rhizome root, or spider web.

A second highly (yet not exclusively) postmodern characteristics that both Morrison and Shields share, is the extreme use of intertextuality; in other words, the practise of copying other writers' words, sentences, even full paragraphs without quotation marks or source references. In a Guardian review of Shields' *Reality Hunger*, poet, writer and Guardian journalist Blake Morrison felt inclined to make a remark on this particular practise:

"I am quite content to go down to posterity as a scissors-and-paste man," [Shields] says. Well, actually, he doesn't say it, James Joyce did. But there are no quotation marks to make that clear, and deliberately so: the book's premise is that "reality can't be copyrighted" and that we all have (or ought to have) ownership of each other's words. True, Shields has been forced to list his citations in small-print footnotes at the back of the book. But he invites readers to remove these with a razor blade, [so] we can't tell whether it's him or someone else talking.^{cclxxvi}

Shields himself claims that "[his] project must raise the art of quoting without quotation marks to the very highest level. Its theory is intimately linked to that of montage."^{cclxxvii} He furthermore defends his (technically illegal) practice of extreme intertextuality, "quoting without quotation marks," as follows:

Our debt to tradition through reading and conversation is so massive, our protest so rare and insignificant —and this commonly on the ground of other reading and hearing— that in a large sense, one would say there is no pure originality. All minds quote. Old and new make the warp and woof of every moment. There is no thread that is not a twist of these two strands.^{cclxxviii}

For thinkers who paved the path of postmodernism, such as Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard and Jacques Derrida, the notion of originality and that of plagiarism strictly speaking constitute metaphysical categories; neither one, when taken literally, can withstand close inspection. Gilbert Lachorelle compares it to the originality that relies on the crowning of a monarch whose irreducibility toward statements by others serves to confirm his claim on ownership. In contrast, he asks, is not plagiarism a copy that is completely devoid of singularities? Could the plagiarist simply be an authority in the retransmission of another's voice? Many postmodern authors, such as Donald Barthelme, Thomas Pynchon and even up to Paul Auster, believe that the reproduction

of a text can only be labeled as such if the context of it is exactly the same. Since context changes constantly, however, a true reproduction cannot be reduced to conformity of text, and plagiarism then becomes an idealization on the report of the ideas of others. Faced with the impossibility of stopping the evolution of meaning, of fixing it firmly in definite representations, the very idea of plagiarism is challenged: repetition is also the displacement and reinvestment of semantic content. This point of view, philosophically pertinent but legally absurd, conveys an "idea of repetition" as foundation of writing.^{cclxxix} The argument follows the following line of logic: any recognizable or simply communicable work goes through a network of signs, through the multiplicity of voices that proliferate within linguistic experience. So much so that nothing exists that is not already subject to a practice of intersubjective nature. The notion of intellectual property involves, even requires knowledge that belongs to oneself, and to others. Lyotard sees no relevance in the establishment of this distinction, nor in the analysis of incidences of copyright. In 1971, structural linguist Roman Jakobson concluded that "there is no such a thing as private property in language: everything is socialized."^{cclxxx} Postmodern writers do not merely subscribe to this tendency, they take it one step further. According to many of them, the writer's activity is found only in intertextuality, where reconstruction and reorientation of borrowed material are predominant. To Foucault, the problem with the author is that he describes himself as the formal cause when he only constitutes its addressee after the fashion of the readers. Neither extremity can hold the other hostage by pretending to the exhaustion of meaning. That being the case, it brings to mind an observation of first approximation: intellectual property no longer exists in a postmodern context.^{cclxxxi}

Morrison, too, pushed the notion of intertextuality to its boundaries, using various quotes of others, with or without quotations marks, most particularly in the volume of *The Lords*. As mentioned in chapter 3 of this paper, a brief history on film is incorporated into this volume, and it consequently is rife with references and names of people who are connected with the cinema and its development. Morrison, who was a film student himself while he started to write *The Lords* in 1964, must have had at his disposal at least one or more specialized sources where he got all this inside information about the prehistory of the cinema.^{cclxxxii} And as it turns out, most of the poems on historical filmmakers or inventors are near literal chunks of text out of a book by Olive Cook, entitled *Movement in Two Dimensions. A study of the animated and projected*

pictures which preceded the invention of cinematography, published by Hutchinson & Co. LTD in London in the year 1963. For comprehensiveness' sake, I will now provide an exhaustive list of the parallels I have found in both works. In *The Lords*, we read the following:

A drunken crowd knocked over the apparatus,
and Mayhew's showman, exhibiting at Islington
Green, burned up, with his mate, inside.^{cclxxxiii}

Henry Mayhew was a 19th century journalist who wrote several reports on London's working class, including the travelling entertainers. In 1853, he interviewed an exhibitor of what was called 'chinese shades': a shadow show with candles and which was performed by so called 'showmen'. The old showman Mayhew interviewed and reported on remained forever anonymous, thus entered history as "Mayhew's showman". In Olive Cook's book, we can read more or less the same passage, but with more details on the shadow play which was performed by the showman:

It was sometimes a dangerous business manipulating the shadows by candlelight, especially when the crowd was disorderly. Once when Mayhew's showman was performing at Islington Green some drunken people knocked over the whole show and it went up in flames with his mate inside.^{cclxxxiv}

Louis Daguerre, the father of photography and inventor of the daguerreotype, could of course not be excluded from this short history. Aside from his contributions to photography, he also developed the Diorama theatre, a mobile theatre device in which two or more painted walls were illuminated to create astonishing visual effects. The fragment on Daguerre's Diorama was written as follows by Morrison:

Daguerre's London Diorama still stands in Regent's
Park, a rare survival, since these shows depended
always on effects of artificial light, produced
by lamps or gas jets, and nearly always ended
in fire.^{cclxxxv}

In Olive Cook's book, we read the following lines on page 38: "Daguerre's London Diorama was built in Park Square East, Regent's Park." And on page 45:

Scarcely any of the immense number of panorama and diorama paintings executed during the nineteenth century survived. Depending, as they almost

always did, on effects of artificial light, produced by means of lamps and gas jets, the great majority, like the buildings which housed them, ended in flames. The Regent's Park Diorama, (is) the only surviving building of its kind in London ^{cclxxxvi}

Carl Wilhelm Gropius was a German Diorama owner and took over a Pleorama, which was similar to a Diorama but would employ the entire space of the performance hall in 180° with added lightning and sound effects to create a real-life effect upon its spectators. Morrison's poem on Gropius goes as follows:

In 1832, Gropius was astounding Paris with his
Pleorama. The audience was transformed into
the crew aboard a ship engaged in battle. Fire,
screaming, sailor, drowning. ^{cclxxxvii}

In Cook's *Movement in Two Dimensions*, we can find the following paragraph:

It was in 1832 that Gropius introduced his attempts at still-further heightened realism, calling the show the Pleorama to distinguish it from the Diorama. He had taken the theme from the architect Langhaus of Breslau. The auditorium was constructed to resemble a small ship holding about thirty people, which sailed across the Bay of Naples or down the Rhine from Mainz to St. Goar, the movement of the picture and auditorium conspiring to give the impression of a changing viewpoint. ^{cclxxxviii}

In writing his poem on Robert Barker, however, Morrison somehow made a spelling error and printed Robert Baker instead. Robert Barker was the inventor of the Panorama, which can be seen as a precursor for the Pleorama. Barker's Panoramas were enormous paintings which revealed an all-encompassing view of certain landscapes or cities.

Robert Baker, an Edinburgh artist, while in jail
for debt, was struck by the effect of light shining
through the bars of his cell through a letter he
was reading, and out of this perception he in-
vented the first Panorama, a concave, transparent
picture view of the city. ^{cclxxxix}

Olive Cook did use the right spelling of the name, so it might have been an error in copying the section on Morrison's account:

The invention of the Panorama is usually attributed to Robert Barker, an Edinburgh painter. In about 1785 he was put into prison for debt and was confined to a cell lit by a grating let into the wall at the junction of wall and ceiling. One day he was reading a letter and to see more clearly carried it below the grating. The effect when the paper was held in the shaft of light falling from the opening was so astonishing that Barker's imagination was set working on the possibilities of controlled light flung from above upon pictures of large dimensions. . . . Later in the same year the artist exhibited a large semi-circular view of Edinburgh in that city. The huge concave picture, which audiences could glimpse out of the corners of their eyes as well as straight in front of them, must have had something of the effect of the modern cinema.^{ccxc}

Even for his poems on Oriental cinema and its ancient traditions, Morrison found his inspiration with Olive Cook's book on cinema. Cook places the origins of the shadow play in the Far East and attributes it with a religious function. Morrison's interest in ancient Eastern religious traditions in the form of shadow play is closely connected to his fascination with Native American or African tribe rituals:

The modern East creates the greatest body of films.
Cinema is a new form of an ancient tradition—the
shadow play. Even their theater is an imitation
of it. Born in India or China, the shadow show
was aligned with religious ritual, linked with
celebrations which centered around cremation of the
dead.^{ccxci}

The section on Eastern cinema in Cook, just like Morrison's poem written on the 48th page, goes as follows:

There is a connection between the shadow play and the supernatural, and this is borne out by what is known of the art in other Far Eastern lands. In Java, as in India, the shadow theatre was part of religious ritual and was believed to be a means of warding off evil, while in Siam, or Thailand, as it is now called, the shades were exhibited only during the celebrations which accompanied the cremation of the dead.^{ccxcii}

Another parallel is dealing with Eadweard Muybridge, a renowned photographer from the second half of the 18th century. His work is most notable for his photographic studies

of motion, and early work in motion-picture projection, specifically for his capture of animal locomotion in stop-motion shots:

Muybridge derived his animal subjects from the Philadelphia Zoological Garden, male performers from the University. The women were professional artists' models, also actresses and dancers, parading nude before the 48 cameras.^{ccxciii}

Cook's section on Muybridge reads as follows:

Between 1883 and 1884 Muybridge began using forty cameras, a Dallmeyer lens and an electro-magnetic shutter to take photographs of men and horses. In 1885 he took pictures of various animals in the Zoological Gardens of Philadelphia and in the following year he concentrated on the study of children, men and women walking and running, of athletics, and of soldiers on the march.^{ccxciv}

Morrison views the Oriental shadow plays as a precursor for modern cinema, along with alchemy, as widely discussed in the first part of this paper. Both practices are similar in that they were among the first attempts of a primitive society to recreate life by the hands of humans instead of gods:

The shadow plays originally were restricted to male audiences. Men could view these dream shows from either side of the screen. When women later began to be admitted, they were allowed to attend only to shadows.^{ccxcv}

In Cook's *Movement in Two Dimensions*, we can find the following paragraph:

The Javanese shadow plays were originally designed for male audiences only and the men were permitted to sit on either side of the screen to watch either the shadows or the figures that cast them. Later, women were admitted to the audience but they were allowed to see nothing but the shadows.^{ccxcvi35}

These example serve the argument of the postmodernists very well, in that the different context of the copied text provides a whole new semantic dimension and thus arguably an entirely different text altogether. Where the text in the original book of Olive Cook

³⁵ These are all the parallels I discovered between both works; yet, since I didn't manage to find the sufficient time to entirely read Cook's book from cover to cover, there might be more.

functions as an enchiridion of the evolution of cinema, those same or approximated sentences carry with them a profound new dimension of metafictional and philosophical self-reflection within the context of all the other prose poems in *The Lords* and the network they constitute. For example, the effectively neutral explanation of the social gender roles within ancient Javanese societies receive an entirely different dimension within the vicinity of Kristeva's gender theories implicitly present in theoretical framework of *The Lords*.³⁶ The image of male privilege starts to resonate with the patriarchal, oppressive society created by *the Lords*, thereby linking it to all the other symbols connected to *the Lords*, and its meaning starts to expand exponentially through the infinitely growing network of resonating images. The imagery of the shadows on their turn, the only side accessibly for women, resonates with the Semiotic and Dionysian side of the theoretical framework. Again, the once neutral words in their original context are instantly connecting with symbols such as *the American Night*, the forests, the *Wilderness* and its *New Creatures* and thereby fiercely growing in its semantic dimensions. Additionally, the dangers of the Diorama and the many casualties they have made through accidents and fires receive in their right a whole new symbolic dimension of meaning as well in combination with Morrison's aphorisms on the link between cinema and death, such as "the appeal of cinema lies in the fear of death" or "the spectator is a dying animal. / Invoke, palliate, drive away the Dead. Nightly."^{ccxcvii} In combination with all of the other elements present in *The Lords*, it almost starts to seem as if it was the sole purpose of cinema right from the beginning to capture the lifelessness of its spectators and sometimes maybe even drag them into an actual death. This layer of meaning could not possibly have been attributed to it by Olive Cook in his study on the development of cinema, yet they mysteriously linger in his very words, presented only in a different context; all of the above finally led Michael McClure to conclude:

[In *The Lords*], *Notes on Vision*, Jim alchemically deconstructed his own UCLA film school thesis into this incredible document. I think the book is a deconstructed thesis, a compression and compaction of a larger document, which is a very good way for a poet to work. I think it's profound for a young man to have put together that many insights like Jim did with *The Lords*. Some of the insights might not be

³⁶ See chapter 1 of this paper.

original, but the assemblage of them together creates a unique, philosophical work. He shows an incredible capacity for dealing with information, both inventive information and real information. It's a strong work.^{ccxcviii}

Chapter 8: Morrison's poetic voice

8.1 Morrison & the Avant-Gardists

William Burroughs, the third figurehead of the Beat Generation, is often connected to other literary currents as well, such as postmodernism, Dadaism, and surrealism; the latter two both being a subgenre of the avant-garde movement, which started off around the turn of the century and stretched out until well into the 1960's.³⁷ Morrison's poetic voice, heavily influenced by the avant-garde movement, is often audibly surreal in tone and imagery. He also intermittently experimented with shape, pattern, or visual poems, in which the typographic dimension of the poem becomes an intrinsic part of the text of the poem; a practise which, notwithstanding its long history, was very popular amongst many avant-gardists (such as e e cummings, Marius de Zayas, Kenneth Rexroth, Wallace Berman, Apollinaire and Paul Van Ostaijen).^{ccxcix} The following poem is an example of Morrison's visual poems:

The grand highway
is
crowded
w/
lovers
&
searchers
&
leavers
so
eager
to
please
&
forget.

Wilderness.^{ccc}

³⁷ Although opinions vary on the specific characteristics and the precise starting and ending point of the movement.

The poem, shaped as a grand highway, takes the reader on the road, past lovers/searchers/leavers towards the final destiny: *wilderness*. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the setting of the highway and the figure of the wanderer/traveler, portrayed in this poem as "lovers & searchers & leavers" are important symbols within Morrison's poetic universe, as they lead the reader away from *the Lords* and bring them to *the New Creatures*. Significantly, the travelers/wanderers in this poem aren't coasting along the highway straight towards the *wilderness*, yet rather seem to roam around in between the two worlds, "eager to please & forget." Only after every former attachment (such as the lovers' loved ones and the searchers' goals) is cut off and utterly forgotten, is it possible to transform into a *New Creature* and reach the *wilderness*. Besides typographic experiments such as the aforementioned poem, Morrison also developed a peculiar, yet systemic, orthography, especially in his later poetry. The word highway, for example, is alternatively found in Morrison's poetry written as hiway, HWY or in its conventional spelling; the word 'through' is exclusively spelled as 'thru'; the words 'with' and 'and' are exclusively spelled as respectively 'w/' and '&'. Morrison's unconventional orthography is based on the actual shortening of the space between words, a mechanism which is openly visible in the evolution of the noun highway/hiway/HWY. Where a conventional spelling would be syntactically joined by the four-letter 'with' or three-letter 'and', Morrison replaces them with the two-character 'w/' and the one-character '&'. Visually, 'w/' and '&' convey a more direct message, a more tightly bound poetic universe than their full-word relations.^{ccci} Since 'w/' and '&' recall more of a direct and visual link, a slide even, towards to following word than the actual preposition, the elements joined together through 'w/' or '&' in the poetry become more tightly bound together than would otherwise be possible.

The most important stylistic element in Morrison's poetry, however, is the montage/collage technique. Influenced by the Dadaist poets from the 20's, William Burroughs further developed their cut-up technique and published the results in a manifesto he wrote with three other authors (Brion Gysin, Sinclair Beilles & Gregory Corso), titled *Minutes to Go* (1960). The cut-up technique was loosely based on a poem by Tristan Tzara:

VII

TO MAKE A DADAIST POEM

Take a newspaper.

Take a pair of scissors.

Choose an article as long as you are planning to make your poem.

Cut out the article.

Then cut out each of the words that make up this article and put them in a bag.

Shake it gently.

Then take out the scraps one after the other in the order
in which they left the bag.

Copy conscientiously.

The poem will be like you.

And here are you a writer, infinitely original and
endowed with a sensibility that is charming
though beyond the understanding of the vulgar.^{ccci}

In his 1963 essay titled *The Cut Up Method*, published in Leroi Jones' anthology *The Moderns: An Anthology of New Writing in America*, Burroughs explains the perks of his specific method:

The cut-up method brings to writers the collage, which has been used by painters for fifty years. And used by the moving and still camera. In fact all street shots from movie or still cameras are by the unpredictable factors of passers by and juxtaposition cut-ups. And photographers will tell you that often their best shots are accidents . . . writers will tell you the same.^{ccci}

Burroughs statement introduces the keyword in analyzing, interpreting and contextualizing Morrison's poetic voice, namely *juxtaposition*, and, surprisingly enough, it strongly re-echoes in Shields' manifesto on the collage technique, published exactly 50 years later:

All definitions of montage share a common denominator; they all imply that meaning is not inherent in any one shot but is created by the juxtaposition of shots. Lev Kuleshov, an early Russian filmmaker, intercut images of an actor's expressionless face with images of a bowl of soup, a woman in a coffin, and a child with a toy. Audiences who saw the film praised the actor's performance; they saw in his face, emotionless as it was, hunger, grief, and affection. They saw, in other words, what was not

really there in the separate images. Meaning and emotion were created not by the content of the individual images but by the relationship of the images to each other.^{ccciv}

And here we stumble upon the core of Morrison's stylistics: meaning and emotion are created not by the content of the individual images but by the relationship of the separate images to each other. Especially the volume of *The New Creatures* and his later poetry are heavily constructed in this principle. In the interview for *Rolling Stone magazine*, Morrison explained the origin of his poetic voice: "I'm interested in film because to me it's the closest approximation in art that we have to the actual flow of consciousness, in both dream life and in the everyday perception of the world."^{cccv} Since Morrison was originally trained in film studies, he intuitively approached and implemented the montage/collage technique, which for Morrison meant the juxtaposition of pure image, into his poetry from the very start. The following poem, from *The New Creatures* volume is a clear example of Morrison's approach of the montage/collage technique through the juxtaposition of pure image:

Savage destiny
Naked girl, seen from behind,
on a natural road

Friends
explore the labyrinth

—Movie
young woman left on the desert

A city gone mad w/ fever^{cccvi}

The poem is constructed out of four —seemingly— unrelated images: a naked girl, friends in a labyrinth, a young woman in the desert and a city fallen ill. With Morrison's montage/collage technique, an enormous amount of freedom of interpretation is available for the reader when cognitively digesting his poetry. This technique allows for a vast, open space between the images which a reader can only bridge by creating subconscious, metaphoric and poetic associations. The first image, that of the naked girl, is set "on a natural road", which strongly implies this girl is one of Morrison's *New Creatures*, yet she is "seen from behind", she has turned her back on the observer and

narrator of the poem. As a consequence of the wide open space between the images, several possible scenarios present themselves in the interpretation of Morrison's poetry: one plausible interpretation is that both the observer and the naked girl are headed in the same direction on the natural road, thus both facing the same way; yet the observer walks in a distance from her and she is therefore only seen from behind. In this scenario, the observer, too, would be well on his way towards *the New Creatures*. Another scenario is that both the naked girl and the natural road are seen from a distance and that the observer isn't headed in her direction at all, yet in amazement s/he watches her from afar. In this scenario, the observer could still be trapped inside the "city mad w/ fever" and longs for the company of *the New Creatures*, yet doesn't have the guts to escape. The second image is one of friends exploring the labyrinth. The only people with whom Morrison ever associated the labyrinth are *the Lords*, (the "guides to the labyrinth") so it is very plausible that these "friends" are, in fact, (some members of) *the Lords*. In that scenario, they would remarkably receive a new qualifier, and a rather positive one for that matter, in Morrison's poetic universe, namely that of "friends". A strong tension can be felt between the setting of the natural road and the setting of the labyrinth, which reaches out, in their corresponding symbolism, to the fourth image, the "city gone mad w/ fever", which might very well be what the labyrinth was referring to from the beginning, yet no longer displayed as a functional description from *the Lords'* perspective, but for what it objectively is: a city gone mad w/ fever. As Burroughs explains in *The Cut Up Method*, the order and chronology of the images can, and should, be arranged and rearranged —both by the poet and the reader— as is pleased. The observer within the poem could be travelling "the natural road" and be having flash backs about his former life within *the city*, maybe even as a *Lord*, when he suddenly sees the naked girl. Or she could be the memory and the observer now finds himself back inside *the city*, he maybe even became one of *the Lords*. Whatever scenario comes to mind, one thing remains constant: the observer has the ability to transcend the boundaries of the Symbolic and the Semiotic, or symbolically speaking: *the city* and *the wilderness*. This ability, or flexibility is, Morrison claims, in accordance with Nietzsche and William Blake, the only recipe for transcendence and unbounded imagination/creativity. The third image is supposed to be derived from a movie which shows a young woman left in the desert. Once again, several possible scenarios appear. The young woman could be the naked girl we see in the first image, who eventually

made it out of the desert onto the natural road as one of *the New Creatures*. Another, more brutal, interpretation is also plausible: the naked girl used to be one of *the New Creatures* living in *the wilderness*, where some day she encountered one of *the Lords*, who seduced, tricked or abducted her to work in *the city* as a sex slave for the perverted masses in its vast network of child prostitution. Once she outgrew her childlike, girlish appearance as a young woman, she was dumped outside of *the city* in the desert. Was it the girl's "savage destiny" to become one of *the New Creatures* or to be dumped in the desert after having functioned as a sex slave? Either scenario would make a great movie. The latter interpretation might seem rather grotesque and somewhat far-fetched, yet it merely serves to demonstrate the wide range of possibilities in interpretation rising from the openness of Morrison's deep imagery. In the end, just as Burroughs and the Dadaists wanted it, the poem becomes a kind of game, a puzzle, which with every reading allows for a different outcome. As McClure pointed out in his comparison to William Carlos Williams's poem *The Red Wheelbarrow*, Morrison's pure image style is also particularly present in the following poem:

Ensenada
the dead seal
the dog crucifix
ghosts of the dead car sun.
Stop the car.
Rain. Night.
Feel.^{cccvii}

All of these separate images assembled together in this one short poem combine and multiply their cognitive resonances and ultimately regenerate new meaning in the process. The opening image of the charming coastal Mexican city quickly turns into a nightmarish and haunted desert, with three images of death in three consecutive lines, ("the dead seal", "crucifix" and "ghosts of the dead") once again connected with the day, daylight, heat and the modern urbanized society, symbolized by the car. In the following line the poem breaks abruptly with a call to "stop the car" (you can almost hear the screeching of the breaks) and leave the path they are headed to avoid their hellish destiny. The travellers then look around in amazement once they get out of the car and into the night, the rain, the wilderness and they feel alive. This short little poem is an excellent example of how Morrison's theoretical framework slowly emerges through the symbolic imagery scattered all over his poems. Numerous interlinked, sometimes even

the same, symbols (re)appear in different poems and create the "thematic resonances" of which Shields spoke. Even though Morrison never explicitly mentions the Semiotic realm or the Dionysian worship culture in his poetry, these vast concepts appear through the connection of a multitude of symbols such as the night, darkness, water/liquid, the sea, the moon, coolness, forests, etc; each one of them symbolic imagery connected to the subconscious and the pre-Oedipal. The outcome of these symbols is always the ability to "feel", to be alive, which is set in sharp opposition to the numerous nightmarish images of dead, always connected to the day, daylight, heat, the sun, the desert, dryness, aridity and bareness, and of course, *the city*. The poem in itself will inevitably fail to convey any coherent message upon a first-time reader with no knowledge about the rest of Morrison's writing; yet over time, it receives more and more (and more and more) semantic layering and depth when the myriad of corresponding symbols in the surrounding poems start to link together in a lateral network of deep imagery: the accumulation of meaning never ends.

So far I have discussed aspects of Morrison's poetry in terms of the French Symbolists, the Beat Generation, the Avant-Gardists and the Postmodernists, yet the two movements that come closest to Morrison's unique style of poetry, especially his later poetry, are the Deep image poetry movement and the Confessional poetry movement.

8.2 Morrison & the Deep Image Poets

Deep Image is a term originally coined by poets Jerome Rothenberg and Robert Kelly to describe stylized, resonant poetry that operated according to the Symbolist theory of correspondences, which posited a connection between the physical and spiritual realms. Rothenberg and Kelly were inspired by Federico García Lorca's "deep song."^{cccviii} The base element of this poetry is the image, whose aim is not to dismantle the reader's sense of self and the world but to startle one into quiet, unwilled acts of recognition. its form is a transfer of dreamlike projections rather than an objectively recognizable progression of images. The term Deep Image poetry was first used by Robert Kelly in his essay *Notes on the Poetry of Deep Image* after a line from an untitled

prose poem by Rotherberg's on the inside cover of the journal *Poems from the Floating World*, published by his own Hawk's Well Press in 1960.³⁸ In his essay, Kelly writes:

The climate of our poetry is the atmosphere of excitement and confrontation I am aware of in Jerome Rothenberg's workings in what he calls 'deep image.' In the second issue of his *Poems from the Floating World* he writes: "The deep image rises from the shoreless gulf. Here the poet reaches down among the lost branches, till a moment of seeing: the poem."

Poetry is not the art of relating word to word, but the ACT of relating word to percept, image to image until the continuum is achieved. The fundamental rhythm of the poem is the rhythm of the images, their textures, their contents, offer supplementary rhythms. When the image, *prima material*, is lacking, the verbal gesture is quickly emptied: the poem elapses instead of happening. 'Systematic derangement' of standard speech rhythms, of the inflexibilities of our analytic grammar, is a sharp exploratory tool, and a means of locking images. The deep image must be transferred from the subconscious to the paper, BUILT into the poem, in language which gives it its fullest spatial, temporal, sonic & kinetic properties, thus supplying the image in its fullest force.^{cccix}

In Deep Image poetry, the poet's inner self and the outer world become landscapes described and fused by images that treat both as physical, yet associatively charged, phenomena. The self in these poems is a profoundly subjective presence whose state of mind, as enacted by a progression of significant but loosely connected images, leads to personal epiphany or emotion that is ultimately understood as interpersonal, reflecting a larger collective wisdom. In the best of these poems the poet's self brings writer and reader into a shared, exploratory state of mind and involves both in an associational journey to an open-ended sort of closure, a final image that feels like revelation yet leaves the participants feeling suspended and pleasantly provoked. One of the movement's most profound repercussions is a more direct and poetic sort of criticism that treats the poem as an experience rather than a statement, self-contained and self-referential, and the reader's experience of the poem as inseparable from the traditional, analytical act of understanding. By highlighting the associative possibilities generated by

³⁸ Hawk's Well Press also published Kelly's volume *Armed Descent* in 1961.

well-chosen concrete imagery and insisting on the involvement of the reader in the poet's act of self-discovery, Deep Image poetry sensitized readers to a resonant and shareable subjectivity evident in much of the poetry being written within and outside the major movements by writers such as Adrienne Rich, Donald Justice, David Ignatow, John Logan, James Dickey, and Elizabeth Bishop. A new breed of North American poets stepped forth around the late 50's for whom images were a mode of thought rather than skillfully crafted decoration. Some of these writers were James Wright, Galway Kinnell, W. S. Merwin, David Ignatow, Donald Hall, William Stafford, and Louis Simpson. The Deep Image movement, although it arose somewhat in response to the spirit of the decade, nevertheless came about largely through the singular energy of Robert Bly, who promoted it as an antidote to Modernist aesthetics. His and William Duffy's magazine *the Fifties*, which began in 1958 and soon became *the Sixties*, flourished throughout the decade as the showcase for writers they felt would steer contemporary American poetry in the direction it needed to go: inward, toward the under explored regions of the psyche, by means of startling but rightly intuited images. In an interview, Bly once stated:

Let's imagine a poem as if it were an animal. When animals run, they have considerable flowing rhythms. Also they have bodies. An image is simply a body where psychic energy is free to move around. Psychic energy can't move well in a non-image statement.^{cccX}

Like Charles Olson and the Projectivists, Bly sought for a style that ranks intuition over rationalism and imagery over discourse, as a means of penetrating, for a moment, the reader's unconscious. Yet much of the poetry produced in the sixties by Olson's adherents, especially that of Denise Levertov, Gary Snyder, and Robert Creeley, did explore and reveal new depths of interaction between the self and the perception of the physical world in resonant ways.^{cccxi}

Besides his own poetic manifesto's and poems, Robert Bly also produced and published translations of European and Latin American poets whose work, more than any other single factor, startled a younger generation of poets into recognizing the general direction they wanted to take. Especially influential were Bly's translations of German writers Gottfried and Georg Tralder, Spanish writers Federico Garcia Lorca and Antonio Machado, Peruvian writer Cesar Vallejo, Chilean writer Pablo Neruda, French

Just like his orthographic system, is Morrison's syntax style an evolution towards shortening. The second line of the poem could possibly originate from the following idea: He has blood on his boots / There is a killer storm raging in his head. The next step would be to express the images in a metaphorical way: His feet are blood boots / His mind a killer storm. The final step Morrison takes is to strip away everything else except for the images he needs: "Blood boots. Killer storm." Now, the images are pressed against each other, yet in between them is a wide open space which the reader can and must use —often to her/his own frustration— to interpret and make sense of the imagery. The same process is present in the following line. The original idea could arguably be: He is a fool to desire gold. He is a fool to desire a God in a heaven. The metaphorical level would comprise it thusly: He desires fool's gold and God in a heaven. And the final step then has only the pure image left: "Fool's gold. God in a heaven." In Morrison's poetry, the voice of the poet is often caught up in a panicked search for a certain girl, in this poem building up the tension and the intensity of the drama by repeating the question three times, stretching it with each repetition. In other poems Morrison provides images of a girl (or young woman) seen in the distance, or left behind in the *wilderness* or desert. Still other times the girl didn't get off so easily and is she portrayed as heavily injured or even passed away. There is reason to believe all of these women, or girls, in fact represent the same archetypal image of 'the sister', subconscious representation of the feminine, or the Semiotic, side of the duality and are under a constant threat by the hordes of killers roaming around Morrison's poetry, representing the dominant, violent and oppressive Symbolic. Right before the resolution of the poem, Morrison inserts an avant-garde-esque line which treats the poem as a movie: "snap shot (projected)". The line, which could easily be a sort of instruction taken from a movie script, immediately breaks with the rest of the poem, constructed out of pure images heavily compressed. The script-like line evokes several images at the same time, yet doesn't carry an imminent image with it. As a result, the poem bursts open at the very moment the images evoked by the movie instruction enter the imagination, moving it from highly abstract to very concrete, where after the poem unleashes its final, ultimate revelation: "She's my sister." In the end, the entire journey made throughout the poem is compressed into a mere eight-line poem, 31 words in total.

8.3 Morrison & the Confessionals

Confessional poetry is the poetry of the personal or "I." This style of writing emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s and is associated with poets such as Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and W.D. Snodgrass. Lowell's book *Life Studies* was a highly personal account of his life and familial ties, and had a significant impact on American poetry. Plath and Sexton were both students of Lowell and noted that his work influenced their own writing. The confessional poetry of the mid-twentieth century dealt with subject matter that previously had not been openly discussed in American poetry. Private experiences with and feelings about death, trauma, depression and relationships were addressed in this type of poetry, often in an autobiographical manner. Sexton in particular was interested in the psychological aspect of poetry, having started writing at the suggestion of her therapist. The confessional poets were not merely recording their emotions on paper; craft and construction were extremely important to their work. While their treatment of the poetic self may have been groundbreaking and shocking to some readers, these poets maintained a high level of craftsmanship through their careful attention to and poetic use of prosody.^{cccxiv} The parallel between the verses of Plath and Rich and those of Morrison are on many levels uncanny. All three poets' verses are constructed in short, three or four word lines, all highly associative and fragmentized. The short lines are sometimes connected, sometimes not. Towards the end of his young life, Morrison also started writing from a personal point of view.³⁹ In the poem *Maids are bickering*. . . Morrison still combines his personal voice with pure abstract image in juxtaposition, yet the evolution towards a more confessional mode is clear:

Maids are bickering in the hall
The day is warm
Last night's perfume
I lie alone in this
cool room

My mind is calm & swirling
like the marble pages of an old book

I'm a cold clean skeleton
scarecrow on a hill
in April
Wind whistles thru my mind

³⁹ The poem "Hurricanes & Eclipse" on p. 98 is another example of these poems.

& soul
Wind eases the arches
of my boney Kingdom^{CCCXV}

Towards the end of his life, Morrison slowly started to unravel his dense and compressed poetic style for a more accessible and straightforward voice. The simile in the middle of the poem ("My mind is calm & swirling / like the marble pages of an old book") would in his earlier style probably have been written down like this: Calm / Swirling mind / Old marble pages. In the opening stanza, all the elements of his theoretical network are present (such as the warm day vs. the night, or the 'I' lying in a cool room), yet they seem to recede all the way to the background, along with the noise of the 'bickering' maids; the only words that actually stand out and keep ringing are "I lie alone". The lyrical 'I' continues in an attempt to reassure the reader, telling them her/his mind is calm, yet at the same time it's swirling, which in the end doesn't seem all that calm. It is even swirling like the marble pages of an old book, which could only mean a book carved in a statue, and consequently not meant to be read or understood. The mind of the 'I' is swirling with ideas but none can read it. Ultimately, the metaphor of death grips the ending of the poem. The 'I' identifies her/himself as "a cold clean skeleton scarecrow on a hill in April". Instead of being taken seriously as a thinker, with a mind like real book, only the cold, hard April wind is blowing through the skeleton's "boney Kingdom", its "mind & soul". Morrison's evolution towards a fully confessional mode found its peak with poems such as *If only I*, fetterlessly expressing Morrison's lingering depression in a mode very similar to other poets of his day:

If only I
 could feel
The sounds
 of the sparrows
& feel childhood
 pulling me
 back again

If only I could feel
 me pulling back
 again
& feel embraced
 by reality
 again

I would die
Gladly die^{cccxi}

The lyrical 'I' of the poem laments the loss of her/his self and the illusion of the notion of 'self.' It is the testimony of a person who has transcended boundaries, has been "embraced by reality" in its infinite perception, and is now unable to adapt to the quotidian narrow "cavern" of her/his surrounding world, a person who is consequently slowly digested by the feeling of alienation and repudiation. After the third stage of Morrison's aesthetic universe, the entire process is inevitably reset; the narrator has gone full circle and arrived back where he started. Having experienced the Olympian bliss of the third stage, the return to the Symbolic is an overwhelmingly traumatic experience: the lyrical 'I' has powerlessly witnessed his gargantuan temple of infinite perception s/he constructed throughout the process, glorious and magnificent and often built over the course of several years, inexorably collapse into the ground, to return to a vast wasteland of oppressive Symbolic structures and sad emptiness. Only the memory of childhood can bring a limited form of comfort, yet even these tiny lights are rapidly fading in the dark. The 'I's disillusionment with life has reached the point where he cannot even 'feel' her/himself to determine the validity of her/his own existence. Morrison's self-conscious portrayal of the anguished poet paused on the edge of the abyss of the self is a symbolic expression of an ultimately destructive conflict between birth and death. It is a resolutely sad and endless search for an ideal.^{cccxvii}

9. Conclusion

James Douglas Morrison died in Paris on July 3 1971 at the age of twenty-seven and was buried in the Père-Lachaise cemetery, alongside some of his literary heroes such as Oscar Wilde, Charles Baudelaire and Paul Verlaine. In the end, Paris was an ideal world for Morrison, a world that was as equally ideal as his notion of the poet; it was a place *to be* a poet, not a famous American rock icon. Consequently, when Morrison's fiancée filed a request to have him buried at the famous Parisian artists' cemetery, she righteously described him as an American poet. In order for the reader to see Morrison as a serious poet, with a clearly defined poetic, s/he ought to read his work as nothing else than poetry, far removed from a strange relic of a dead rock star. Morrison saw poetry as an art form to push the boundaries of convention and of reality, yet also as a means of continuing tradition of thought, history and art.^{cccxviii}

On and off for the past two years, I have spent my days reconstructing Morrison's poetic framework from scratch, in order to shed light on the depth and extend of his poetic universe, in the hope that it will spark off further interest, open up Morrison's poetry for the general public and hopefully, ultimately give Morrison-scholarship a —modest— push towards maturity. Within the space of my master dissertation, I took my first attempt in clarifying Morrison's poetic universe by means of unravelling, decoding and describing the theoretical/philosophical framework around which it is constructed. Throughout my research, I have discovered many astonishing layers within Morrison's poetry, several of which I have laid out over the course of this paper. Yet, during the same process I have, to my greatest frustrations, been faced repeatedly with its shortcomings as well; first and foremost, its overly obscure character, which necessitates a project like this to make the poetry comprehensible to others, both enthusiasts and scholars alike. Morrison's initial tone of naïve Idealism, of which most of *The Lords* is comprised, eventually toned down for a more mature and abstract verse. Furthermore, it would have been fruitful for Morrison to engage more in correspondence with other poets and literary institutions of his time, both to develop and enrich his poetic voice and to spread awareness of his own literary projects. Yet, despite its obvious flaws and shortcomings, most of them due to from Morrison's frequent states of inebriation and early death, at the eve of this first endeavour in

unlocking Morrison's poetic wilderness, I strongly believe his poetry has much more to offer than anyone, including myself, had originally expected. I started out this project two years ago, out of curiosity and as an opportunity to fully get into Morrison's poetry at last, without many expectations of where it would lead me, yet the deeper I delved the more I became convinced of its astounding literary qualities. In describing and analysing Morrison's philosophical framework, a first important step has been taken towards a comprehensive in-depth analysis of Morrison's poetry. Much research is still missing, such as a thorough thematic and stylistic analysis of Morrison's poetry and an extensive comparison with the larger scope of the literary context of 20th century American poetry/literature. Be that as it may, I hope this paper may inspire some scholars to take a closer look at Morrison's poetry, so that hopefully someday, Morrison's full literary qualities may be revealed to the world.

*"A man searching
for lost Paradise
Can seem a fool
To those who never
Sought the other world."*

—James Douglas Morrison

10. Endnotes

- ⁱ Nick Tosches and Fiona Sturges, for example, are fervent Morrison critics. (Rolling Stone, 1979)
- ⁱⁱ Balz 2008: 39
- ⁱⁱⁱ Shields 2010: 76
- ^{iv} Greenham 2008: 8
- ^v Shields 2010: 73
- ^{vi} Shields 2010: 76
- ^{vii} Shields 2010: 82-83
- ^{viii} Woods 2010: 6/31-32
- ^{ix} *The Lords* 3-4
- ^x Balz 1990: 45
- ^{xi} *The Lords* 18
- ^{xii} Cook 2015: 22-23
- ^{xiii} Stypinski 2008: 20
- ^{xiv} Information concerning Morrison's interest in Nietzsche can be found in a number of books such as: *The Lizard King: The Essential Jim Morrison* by Jerry Hopkins; *Break on Through: The Life and Death of Jim Morrison* by James Riordan and Jerry Prochnicky; *Jim Morrison: Life, Death, Legend* by Stephen Davis; *No One Here Gets Out Alive* by Jerry Hopkins and Danny Sugarman; *Riders on the Storm: My Life with Jim Morrison and the Doors* by John Densmore; and *Light My Fire: My Life with the Doors* by Ray Manzarek.
- ^{xv} Daniels 2013: 45
- ^{xvi} Nietzsche 1871: 22-23
- ^{xvii} Daniels 2013: 51-52
- ^{xviii} Daniels 2013: 45
- ^{xix} Daniels 2013: 51-52
- ^{xx} Nietzsche 1871: 6
- ^{xxi} *The Lords* 8
- ^{xxii} Nietzsche 1871: 13
- ^{xxiii} Daniels 2013: 46
- ^{xxiv} Nietzsche 1871: 6
- ^{xxv} Daniels 2013: 3
- ^{xxvi} Silk and Stern 1983: 168
- ^{xxvii} Greenham 2008: 14
- ^{xxviii} Lacan 1966
- ^{xxix} Ritzer 2008: 170
- ^{xxx} Lacan 1966: 230
- ^{xxxi} Homer 2005: 57
- ^{xxxii} Lacan 1966: 89
- ^{xxxiii} Perumalil 2009
- ^{xxxiv} Willette 2013
- ^{xxxv} Willette 2013
- ^{xxxvi} Greenham 2008: 15
- ^{xxxvii} James 1981
- ^{xxxviii} Thomas 1970
- ^{xxxix} Plato 1999: 316
- ^{xl} *The Lords*, 81
- ^{xli} Cook 2015: p?
- ^{xlii} *Wilderness* 12
- ^{xliii} James 1981
- ^{xliv} *The New Creatures* 104
- ^{xlv} Steven 2011, 24-25
- ^{xlvi} Nietzsche 1901: 8
- ^{xlvii} Nietzsche 1901: 18
- ^{xlviii} Mangion 2003:10
- ^{xlix} Kristeva 1980: 24
- ^l James 1981

-
- li Greenham 2008: 29
lii Willette 2013
liii James 1981
liv James 1981
lv E.g. Cook 2015:21
lvi Magnus 1990: 40
lvii Sugerman1983: 188
lviii Nietzsche 1871
lix Daniels 2013: 4
lx Cybulska 2009
lxi Daniels 2013: 45
lxii Mangion 2003: 4
lxiii Nietzsche 1871: 23
lxiv Silk
lxv *The Lords* 30
lxvi Coupe 1997: 10
lxvii Nietzsche 1871: 23
lxviii Campbell 1972
lxix Mangion 2003: 10
lxx Magion 2003: 11
lxxi *The Lords*, 20-21
lxxii Cook 2015: 26
lxxiii Morrison 1969/1985
lxxiv Riordan & Prochnicky 1991: 57
lxxv Greenham 2008: 53
lxxvi Angerer 1999: 161
lxxvii *The Lords* 36
lxxviii Lacan 1966: 7-9
lxxix *The Lords* 37-38
lxxx Freud: 1913/1960: 29
lxxxi Greenham 2008: 56
lxxxii *The Lords* 9
lxxxiii Greenham 2008: 59
lxxxiv *The Lords* 44
lxxxv *The Lords* 15-17
lxxxvi Greenham 2008: 56
lxxxvii *The Lords* 32
lxxxviii Artaud 1958: 84
lxxxix *The Lords* 31
xc *The Lords* 32
xci *The Lords* 33
xcii *The New Creatures* 99
xciii *The Lords* 10
xciv *The Lords* 8
xcv E.g. Greenham 2008
xcvi *The Lords* 10
xcvii *The Lords* 8
xcviii Greenham 2008: 54
xcix *The Lords* 43/47/60-61
c Artaud 1958: 84
ci Greenham 2008: 60
cii *The Lords* 42
ciii Greenham 2008: 60
civ Thomas 1970
cv Greenham 2008: 61
cvi *The Lords* 56

-
- cvii *The Lords* 44
cviii Greenham 2008: 61
cix *The Lords* 62-64
cx Nietzsche 1872: 14-17
cxi Greenham 2008: 9
cxii Nietzsche 1983: 123 ??
cxiii Mangion 2003: 5
cxiv Hoad 1995
cxv OED 2017
cxvi The Famous People 2016
cxvii Davis 2005: 43
cxviii Artaud 1958: 1
cxix Artaud 1958: 9
cxx Mangion 2003: 4
cxi Artaud 1958: 111
cxii Artaud 1958: 110
cxiii All quotes from Artaud 1976: 47-48
cxiv Hertz 2003: 14-15
cxv E.g. Tosches 1979
cxvi Willette 2013
cxvii Robbins 2000: 128
cxviii Nietzsche 1872: 11
cxix Nietzsche 1872: 11
cxx Nietzsche 1872: 11
cxxi Nietzsche 1872: 13
cxxii Bailey 2013
cxxiii Cook 2004: 473
cxxiv Langman 2014: 6
cxxv Willette 2013
cxxvi *The Lords* 46
cxxvii Rolling Stone Magazine 1969
cxxviii *The Lords* 59
cxxix Hopkins 1992: 40-1
cxl Greenham 2008: 41
cxli *The Lords* 79
cxlii Artaud 1958: 48
cxliii *The Lords* 76/79
cxliv *The Lords* 75
cxlv *The Lords* 77
cxlvi *The Lords* 78
cxlvii Merriam-Webster 2017
cxlviii *The Lords* 79
cxlix Jung 1959/1968: 28
cl Jung 1959/1968: 29
cli Jung 1959/1968: 286
clii Artaud 1958: 28
cliii Coupe 1997: 53
cliv *The Lords* 66
clv Lawler 1969: 74
clvi Lehman 2003: 48
clvii *The Lords* 46
clviii *The Lords* 82
clix *The New Creatures* 87
clx *The New Creatures* 93
clxi Jung 1968: 30
clxii Sanchez 2015: 2-3

-
- clxiii Campbell 1972: 117
clxiv Nietzsche 1883: 21-22
clxv *The Lords* 71
clxvi Nietzsche 1871: 13
clxvii *The Lords* 72
clxviii Artaud 1958: 31
clxix Bailey 2013
clxx James 1981
clxxi *Wilderness* 151
clxxii Balz 2008: 61
clxxiii *The New Creatures* 92
clxxiv Artaud 1958: 10
clxxv Greenblatt 2006: 114
clxxvi James 1981
clxxvii James 1981
clxxviii Artaud 1958: 9
clxxix *The New Creatures* 102
clxxx Thomas 1970
clxxxi Nietzsche 1871: 28
clxxxii *The Lords* 70
clxxxiii *The Lords* 66
clxxxiv Campbell & Moyers 1988: 49-50
clxxxv Moreno 2001: 42
clxxxvi Stypinski 2008: 49
clxxxvii Dugger 2007: 2
clxxxviii Blake 1997: 39
clxxxix Makdisi 2003: 261-2
cxc Blake 1997: 39
cxci Blake 1997: 34
cxcii Greenblatt 2012: 148
cxciij Fry 2005: 295 (both quotes)
cxciiv Makdisi 2003: 262
cxci v Blake 1997: 664
cxci vi Makdisi 2003: 262
cxci vii Dawson 2013: 64
cxci viii Wilson 1927: 45
cxci x Nietzsche 1871: 11
cc Nietzsche 1871: 44
cci Wicks 2005: 101
ccii Stypinski 2008: 66
cciii Stypinski 2008: 51
cciv *The Lords* 16
ccv *The Lords* 9
ccvi Hopkins and Sugerman 1980: 143
ccvii Abraham 1998: 85
ccviii Abraham 1998: 118
ccix Greenham 2008: 41
ccx *The Lords* 74
ccxi Campbell 1988: 135
ccxii Abraham 1998: 137-8
ccxiii Blake 1997: 697
ccxiv Bloom & Trilling 1973: 17-8
ccxv Greenham 2008: 147-8
ccxvi *The American Night* 34
ccxvii Campbell & Moyers 1988: 120

-
- ccxviii Greenham 2008: 147
ccxix Cook 2015: 67
ccxx Whitman 1954: 44
ccxxi Cook 2015: 65
ccxxii Ginsberg 2007: 154
ccxxiii Balz 2008: 34
ccxxiv *Wilderness* 7
ccxxv Balz 2008: 34
ccxxvi Cook 2013: 17/51
ccxxvii *Wilderness* 8
ccxxviii *The American Night* 7
ccxxix Cook 2015: 69
ccxxx *The American Night* 10
ccxxxicccxxi Ginsberg 2007: 139
ccxxxii Madrid 2015: 12
ccxxxiii Ginsberg 2007: 134
ccxxxiv Madrid 2015: 14
ccxxxv *The American Night* 27
ccxxxvi Balz 2008: 62-63
ccxxxvii Ginsberg 2007: 134
ccxxxviii Madrid 2015: 14-15
ccxxxix *The American Night* 4
ccxl Ginsberg 1959
ccxli Janssen 2017
ccxlii *The American Night* 187-189
ccxliii Madrid 2015: 19-20
ccxliv George Mason University "Judge Clayton W. Horn's decision in *The People of California v. Lawrence Ferlinghetti*
ccxlv Goldberg 1997
ccxlvj Madrid 2015: 22
ccxlvii Miami Herald, March 5, 1969
ccxlviii Hopkins & Sugerman 1980: 236
ccxlix Miami Herald, March 3, 1969
ccl Florida Penal Statutes, Section 798.02
ccli Florida Penal Statutes, Sections 800.03; 847.04; and 856.01
cclii US Dept. of Justice, internal memo, April 14, 1969
ccliii Preston 2017
ccliv Corbin 2015
cclv Poemhunter 2017
cclvi Shivani 2011
cclvii Lisciandro 2014: 225
cclviii Shivani 2011
cclix Lisciandro 2014: 218-219
cclx Recordmecca 2017
cclxi Riordan & Prochnick 1992: 380
cclxii Lisciandro 1991: 112-114
cclxiii Lehman 2003:46
cclxiv Crawford 2008: 9/29-30
cclxv Pichois 1976: 273
cclxvi Lehman 2003: 47
cclxvii Lehman 2003: 47-49
cclxviii Lehman 2003: 46
cclxix Lehman 2003: 46-47
cclxx *The Lords* 24
cclxxi Lehman 2003:46
cclxxii *The Lords* 66

cclxxiii Lawler 1969: 74
 cclxxiv Lehman 2003: 48
 cclxxv Woods 2010: 6/31-32
 cclxxvi Morrison 2010
 cclxxvii Shields 2010: 78
 cclxxviii Shields 2010: 79
 cclxxix Giovannangeli 1979: 15
 cclxxx Jakobson 1971: 249
 cclxxxi Larochelle 1999: 117-121
 cclxxxii De Spriet 2014
 cclxxxiii *The Lords* 53
 cclxxxiv Cook 1963: 80
 cclxxxv *The Lords* 55
 cclxxxvi Cook 1963: 38/45
 cclxxxvii *The Lords* 54
 cclxxxviii Cook 1963: 43
 cclxxxix *The Lords* 55
 ccxc Cook 1963:32
 ccxci *The Lords* 48
 ccxcii Cook 1963: 48
 ccxciii *The Lords* 41
 ccxciv Cook 1963: 131
 ccxcv *The Lords* 49
 ccxcvi Cook 1963: 56-57
 ccxcvii *The Lords* 47-60-61
 ccxcviii Lisciandro 2014: 218-219
 ccxcix Kempton 2005
 ccc *Wilderness* 15
 ccci Balz 2008: 58-59
 cccli Tzara 1920
 ccclii Burroughs 1963
 cccliv Shields 2010: 74-75
 ccclv Rolling Stone Magazine 1969
 ccclvi *The New Creatures* 100
 ccclvii *The New Creatures* 117
 ccclviii Poetry Foundation 2017
 ccclix Kelly 1961
 ccclx Arbor 1980: 180
 ccclxi Ullman 2005
 ccclxii Ullman 2005
 ccclxiii *Wilderness* 9
 ccclxiv Academy of American Poets 2014
 ccclxv *The American Night* 184
 ccclxvi *The American Night* 187
 ccclxvii Cook 2013: 27-28
 ccclxviii Cook 2015:72-75

11. Bibliography

Primary literature:

Courson, C. B., Courson, P. M., Lisciandro, F., Lisciandro, K. (Eds.). *Wilderness: The Lost Writings of Jim Morrison*. Penguin Books, 1988

Courson, C. B., Courson, P. M., Lisciandro, F., & Lisciandro, K. (Eds.). *The American Night: The Writings of Jim Morrison*. Penguin Books, 1990

Morrison, J. *The Lords*. Omnibus, 1969/1985

Morrison, J. *The New Creatures*. Omnibus, 1970/1985

Secondary literature:

Abraham, L. *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*. Cambridge University Press, 1998

Academy of American Poets. *A Brief Guide to Confessional Poetry*. 2014
<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/brief-guide-confessional-poetry> Last visited 06/05/2017

Angerer, M-L. *Life as Screen? Or how to grasp the virtuality of the body*. Filozofski vestnik 1999: 153-164

Arbor, A. *Talking All Morning*. University of Michigan Press, 1980.

Artaud, A. *The Theater and Its Double*. Grove Press, 1958

Artaud, A. *The Peyote Dance*. Farrar/Straus, 1976

Balz, C. *The Mass Sacrificial Spectacle, The Doors in Poetry and History*. Stanford University Press, 1990/2008

Bailey, L. *On Julia Kristeva's "the semiotic"*, 2013
<https://feministtheory2013.wordpress.com/2013/02/04/on-julia-kristevas-the-semiotic/> Last visited 03/05/2016

Baudelaire, C. *Correspondance I (janvier 1832-février 1860)*. Gallimard, 1973

Baudelaire, C. *Correspondance II (février 1860 – avril 1867)*. Gallimard, 1973

Blake, W. Erdman, D. Bloom, H. *The Complete Poetry & Prose of William Blake Paperback*. Random House 1997

- Bloom, H., & Trilling, L. (Eds.). *Romantic Poetry and Prose* (Vol. 4). Oxford University Press, 1973
- Burroughs, W. *The Cut Up Method. The Moderns: An Anthology of New Writing in America*. Corinth Books, 1963
- Campbell, J. *The Masks of God: Oriental Mythology* (Vol. 2). Souvenir Press, 1962
- Campbell, J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* (Vol. 3). Souvenir Press, 1964
- Campbell, J. *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* (Vol. 4). London: Penguin Books, 1968
- Campbell, J. *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology* (2nd ed. Vol. 1). Souvenir Press, 1969
- Campbell, J. *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: Metaphor as Myth and as Religion*. Harper Collins, 1986
- Campbell, J. *This Business of the Gods*. Windrose Films Ltd, 1989
- Campbell, J. *Myths to Live By*. Penguin Books, 1972
- Campbell, J., & Moyers, B. *The Power of Myth*. Doubleday, 1988
- "Capital" Merriam-Webster.com/ Merriam-Webster, n.d, 25/06/2017.
- Cook, J. *Poetry in theory: an anthology, 1900-2000*. Blackwell, 2004.
- Cook, O. *Movement in Two Dimensions. A study of the animated and projected pictures which preceded the invention of cinematography*. Hutchinson & Co. LTD, 1963
- Cook, W. *Gaze Into The Abyss: The Poetry of Jim Morrison*. 2015
- Coupe, L. *Myth*. Routledge, 1997
- Cybulska, E. *Oedipus: A Thinker At The Crossroads*. Philosophy Now. N.p., 2009.
https://www.academia.edu/9237239/Oedipus_A_Thinker_At_The_Crossroads
 (Last visited on 05/01/2016)
- Daniels, P. *Nietzsche and "The Birth of Tragedy"*. Routledge, 2013
- Dawson T. "A Firm Perswasion": God, Art, and Responsibility in Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. *Jung Journal*, 7:2, 2013.
- Davis, S. *Jim Morrison: Life, Death, Legend*. London: Random House, 2005
- De Spriet, F. *The importance of cinema and the movies in the life and poetry of Jim Morrison: The Lords*. <http://frankdespriet.blogspot.be/2014/04/the-importance-of-cinema-and-movies-in.html> 2014 Last visited 05/04/2017

- Deep Image, Poetry Foundation. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms/deep-image> Last visited 04/06/2017
- "Demon" OED Online. Oxford University Press, March 2017. Web. 01/06/2017.
- Deleuze, G. *Spinoza: practical philosophy*. San Fransisco, 1988
- Deleuze, G., Guattari F. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota, 1983.
- Densmore, J. *Riders on the Storm: My Life with Jim Morrison and The Doors*. Arrow Books Limited, 1990
- Dugger, M. *Infinite perception: William Blake's Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. East Texas Baptist University, 2007
- Faivre, A. *The Eternal Hermes: From Greek God to Alchemical Magus* (J. Godwin, Trans.). Phanes Press, 1995
- Florida Penal Statues, US Dept. of Justice, internal memo, 14/05/1969
- Fowlie, W. *Rimbaud and Jim Morrison: The Rebel as Poet*. Duke University Press, 1994
- Frye, N. *Northrop Frye on Milton and Blake, Volume 16* University of Toronto Press, 2005
- Giovannangeli, D. *Ecriture et repetition*. Union Generale d'Editions. 1979
- Ginsberg, A. *Notes Written on Finally Recording Howl*. 1959. Department of English, Queen's University, 2006
- Ginsberg, A. *Collected Poems 1947-1997*, Harper Perennial Modern Classics 2007
- Goldberg, D. *Allen Ginsberg: Poet, Legal Scholar, Rock Star*. Los Angeles Times; 13/04/1997
- González Moreno, Beatriz. *The Discourse of the Sublime and the Inadequacy of Presentation*. La questione romantica 10.1): 41-48, 2001
- Goodchild, P., Deleuze G. and Guattari F. *Introduction to the politics of desire*, London 1996
- Greenblatt, S. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature. 8th ed. Vol. D. "William Blake: Introduction."* W. W. Norton & Co. Inc. 2006

- Greenblatt, S, gen. ed. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature. 9th ed. Vol. D.* Norton, 2012.
- Greenham, E. *Vision and Desire: Jim Morrison's Mythography Beyond the Death of God.* Edith Cowan University Press, 2008
- Hertz, U. *Artaud in Mexico.* Oregon University Press, 2003
- Hoad, T.F. *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology.* Oxford University Press, 1995
- Homer, S. *Jacques Lacan.* Psychology Press, 2005
- Hopkins, J. Sugerman, D. *No One Here Gets Out Alive.* Warner Books, 1980
- Hopkins, J. *The Lizard King: The Essential Jim Morrison.* Plexus Publishing Limited, 1992
- Jakobson, R. *Words and Language.* Walter de Gruyter, 1971
- Janssen, Ms. <http://www.litkicks.com/Topics/Jazz.html>. Last visited 21/07/2017
- James, L. *Jim Morrison: Ten Years Gone.* Creem Magazine, 1981
- Janssen, Ms. <http://www.litkicks.com/Topics/Jazz.html>. Last visited 21/07/2017
- "Judge Clayton W. Horn's decision in *The People of California v. Lawrence Ferlinghetti*"
George Mason University
- Jung, C. G. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans. 2nd ed. Vol. 9 Part I). Princeton University Press, 1959/1968
- Kelly, R. *Notes on the Poetry of Deep Image.* Trobar #2, 1961
- Kempton, K. *VISUAL POETRY: A Brief History of Ancestral Roots and Modern Traditions.* Full Moon 2005
- Kristeva, J. *Powers of Horror.* Columbia University Press, 1982
- Lacan, J. *Ecrits.* W. W. Norton, 1966/2006
- Larochelle, Gilbert. *From Kant To Foucault: What Remains of the Author in Postmodernism.* In: Perspectives on Plagiarism and Intellectual Property in a Postmodern World, p. 111-121. State University of New York Press. 1999
- Lawler, J. *The language of French Symbolism.* Princeton University Press. 1969
- Lehman, D. *The Prose Poem: An Alternative to Verse.* The American Poetry Review, Vol. 32, No. 2 pp. 45-49, 2003
- Lin, M. *Spinoza's metaphysics of desire.* Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie 86, 21-55,

2004

Lisciandro, F. *Jim Morrison: Friends Gathered Together*. Vision Words & Wonder LLC, 2014

Lisciandro, F. *Morrison, A Feast Of Friends*. Warner books, 1991

Madrid, V. *A Countercultural Vision of America: Allen Ginsberg and the Beat Generation*. Jaén University Press 2015

Magnus, B. Higgins K.M. *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*. Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Makdisi, S. *William Blake And The Impossible History of the 1790s*. University of Chicago, 2003

Mangion, C. *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Myth*. Humanitas, Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Ed. Lydia Scriha, Volume 2, University of Malta Press, 2003

Mazza, M. 02/01/2002 https://www.thriftbooks.com/w/the-lords-and-the-new-creatures-poems_jim-morrison/250582/#isbn=0671205390 Last visited 05/08/2016

Morrison, B. *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto by David Shields*. The Guardian 2010
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/feb/20/reality-hunger-david-shields-review>

Miami Herald. *Jim Morrison Arrested in Miamia*. 5/03/1969

Nietzsche, F. *The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music*. Penguin Books, 1871/1994

Nietzsche, F. *Alzo Sprach Zarathustra*. Penguin Books, 1883-1891/2013

Nietzsche, F, Förster-Nietzsche, E. *The Will To Power*. Penguin Books, 1901/2017

Patty, J. *Notes, Documents, and Critical Comment, Baudelaire and Bossuet on Laughter*. PMLA 80 (1965): 459-461.

Perumalil, A. *The History of Women in Philosophy*. Global Vision Publishing House, 2009

Pichois, C éd. *Œuvres complètes I et II: Charles Baudelaire*. Gallimard, 1975-1976

Plato, Warmington and Rouse, eds. *Great Dialogues of Plato*. Signet Classics: 1999

Poemhunter contributors. *Michael McClure*. <https://www.poemhunter.com/michael-mcclure/biography/> Last visited 20/06/2017

Preston, J. *New Evidence In The Miami incident*.

- <http://www.doorscollectorsmagazine.com/miami/truth.html> Last visited 02/04/2016
- Recordmecca Contributors. *Jim Morrison – Unpublished Film Script Written With Michael McClure “Saint Nicholas”*. <https://recordmecca.com/item-archives/doors-st-nicholas/> Last visited 02/07/2017
- Reiff, C. *The Day Jim Morrison Was Sentenced on Obscenity Charges in Miami*. 30/10/2015 <http://ultimateclassicrock.com/jim-morrison-miami-sentence/> Last visited 02/04/2016
- Rich, Adrienne. *Later Poems: Selected and New: 1971-2012*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2012.
- Rimbaud, A. *Collected Poems*. Oxford University Press, 2010
- Riordan, J. Prochnicky, J. *Break on Through: The Life and Death of Jim Morrison*. It Books, 2006
- Ritzer, G. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. 2008
- Rocco, J. (Ed.) *The Doors Companion: Four Decades of Commentary*. Omnibus Press, 1997
- Sanchez, P. *The Visionary Tradition in Jim Morrison's “The Celebration of the Lizard”* CSU Fresno Press 2015
- Shields, D. *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto*. Knopf 2010
- Shivani, A. *Exclusive: Beat Poet Michael McClure On Jim Morrison*. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anis-shivani/exclusive-beat-poet-mcclure_b_823425.html Last visited on 15/01/2017
- Silk, M. S. Stern, J. P. *Nietzsche on Tragedy*. Cambridge University Press, 1983
- Steven, A. *The Poet Behind The Doors: Jim Morrison's Poetry and the 1960's Countercultural Movement*. Georgetown University Press, 2011
- Steven, G. *Baudelaire and Barthes: The Pleasure of the Prose Poetry*. Georgia State University Press 2008
- Sugerman, D. *The Doors: The Illustrated History*. Harper Paperbacks, 1983
- Stypinski, M. *“Reinventing The Gods”: Bloomian Misprision in the Nietzschean Influence of Jim Morrison*. Ohio Dominican University Press, 2008
- The Famous People contributors. *Jim Morrison*. The Famous People website. www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/jim-morrison-178.php. Last visited 09/01/2016

- Thomas, Tony. *Interview with Jim Morrison*. CBC Network, 1970. (Entire interview available on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQfr-BtcDII>)
- Tosches, Nick. *The Doors: An American Prayer*. Rolling Stone Magazine, 1979
- Tzara , T. *Dada Manifesto On Feeble Love And Bitter Love* .1920
<http://www.391.org/manifestos/1920-dada-manifesto-feeble-love-bitter-love-tristan-tzara.html> Last visited 06/04/2017
- Ullman, L. *Deep Imagists: The Subconscious as Medium*. 2005
<http://www.meachamwriters.org/writers/leslie-ullman.htm> Last visited 05/06/2017
- Woods, T. *Beginning Postmodernism*. Manchester University Press 2010
- Wicks, R. *Nietzsche's 'Yes' to Life and the Apollonian Neutrality of Existence*. 2005
- Willette, J. *Julia Kristeva and Abjection*. <http://arthistoryunstuffed.com/julia-kristeva-and-abjection/> 2013. Last visited on 30/05/2017
- Wilson, M. *The Life of William Blake*. Nonesuch Press, 1927
- Whitman, W. *Leaves of Grass*. Signet Classics 1954

12. Abstract

James Douglas Morrison, commonly known as Jim Morrison from The Doors, was, aside from being a rock star, an American poet that went largely unnoticed by critics and experts alike. Up to this day, Jim Morrison's poetry remains a rather controversial subject matter within academic circles, which often consider it to be vain and trivial due to the combination of Morrison's image as a rock star and the often highly obscure nature of his poetry, but the tide is slowly turning. Academic interest in Morrison's poetry has sparked off around the turn of the century and research has been gradually growing every since. Notwithstanding, an in-depth analysis of the overarching framework of Morrison's poetry has as of yet not been realized. Given the fact that it is hardly impossible, or at least extremely difficult, to analyse Morrison's poetry in a satisfying manner without first fully comprehending the philosophical/theoretical framework enfolding his poetry, most of his literary qualities consequently remain to this day unknown. I therefore decided to use the space of my master dissertation for a first attempt in clarifying Morrison's poetic universe by means of unravelling, decoding and describing the theoretical/philosophical framework around which it is constructed. This framework has been largely influenced by the writings of several European Idealists, most importantly those by William Blake, Arthur Rimbaud, Friedrich Nietzsche and Antonin Artaud. In describing the theoretical/philosophical framework, this project intends to break open and dissect Morrison's highly obscure and dense poetry in an attempt to accelerate the turning of the tide and prove Morrison's merits as a genuine and valuable contributor to American poetry.

